Green Politics and the Concept of Nature:

Heidegger, Nature and the Earth

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Summary

This thesis investigates the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics. Nature, in the green literature, is usually assumed to refer to the nonhuman environment. But critics of this way of thinking about nature argue that humans exist in such interconnected networks with their environments that environments cannot be divided into categories of human and nonhuman. These criticisms suggest that we should abandon talking about nature and concentrate instead on investigating the complex relationships we share with our environments. But even in the light of these criticisms the idea of nature does seem to articulate something important about green politics which cannot be communicated by just investigating the relationships that we share with our environments. I turn to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger to make sense of this concept of nature. Heidegger makes numerous references to the unfolding of nature and the earth in his works. His philosophy has thus been used to make sense of what is at stake in taking care of our environments. In mainstream green readings of Heidegger, nature is understood as referring to the spontaneous growth of a nonhuman nature. However, I will approach nature in Heidegger's work differently, divorcing these concepts of nature and the earth from descriptions of the material growth of nonhuman natural beings. This allows us to understand the importance of the idea of nature in green politics. Paying attention to nature is important not because it allows us to address environmental crisis, but because it allows us to stop thinking that we can represent things through calculations and to think of them as mere resources. This thesis proposes thinking of green politics as having two separate goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment.

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Contents

List of Abbreviations

AF ‘Anaximander Fragment’

AS ‘Der Spruch des Anaximander’

AWP ‘Age of the World Picture’

BDT ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’

BH ‘Brief uber den Humanismus

BP *Beiträge zur Philosophy: Vom Ereignis*

BPP *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*

BT *Being and Time*

BWD ‘Bauen Wohnen Denken’

CP *Contributions to Philosophy: From Enowning*

Ding ‘Das Ding’

DOT *Discourse on Thinking*

DWM ‘… Dichterisch Wohnet der Mensch…’

EHD *Erlauterung zur Hölderlin’s Dichtung*

EHP *Elucidations on Hölderlin’s Poetry*

EM *Einführungen in der Metaphysik*

EP ‘On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis* in Aristotle’s Physics B, 1’

ET ‘On the Essence of Truth’

FCM *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*

FS *Four Seminars*

FT ‘Die Frage Nach Der Technik’

G *Gelassenheit*

GP *Grundprobleme der Phänemenologie*

GR *Hölderlin’s Hymne Germania und Rhein*

IG *Hölderlin’s Hymne der Ister*

IE *Hölderlin’s Hymn Ister,* English Translation

LH ‘Letter on Humanism

IM *Introduction to Metaphysics*

NL ‘Nature of Language’

OWA ‘Origins of the Work of Art’

PE *Parmenides*, English Translation

PG *Parmenides*

RZ *Reden und Andere Zeugnisse*

PMD ‘…Poetically Man Dwells…’

SA ‘The Self-Assertion of the German University’

Spiegel ‘“Only a God Can Save Us” *Der Spiegel’s* Interview with Martin Heidegger’

SZ *Sein und Seit*

Thing ‘The Thing’

QCT ‘Question Concerning Technology’

UK ‘Ursprung Des Kunstwerkes’

WCT *What is Called Thinking*

WHD *Was Heisst Denken*

WL ‘The Way to Language’

WM ‘What is Metaphysics’

WIM ‘Was ist Metaphysik’

WP ‘Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Phusis.* Aristotle’s Physik B, 1’

WS ‘Das Wesen Der Sprache’

WSP ‘Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?’

WW ‘Vom Wesen Der Wahrheit’

WZS ‘Der Weg Zur Sprache’

ZWB ‘Zeit des Weltbildes

Introduction

Apples

My grandparents live in a house with a big garden in the Finnish countryside. The garden is full of apple trees, which I would often wander through in the summer. I enjoyed the quietness of the garden, away from noisy cities. I enjoyed seeing the apple trees in bloom and watching my grandfather working on his vegetable plot. There was always peace in the garden. There was also a sense of expectation there which I felt while I waited for the apples to ripen. I would watch the apple trees, hoping for a lot of fruit so that my grandparents could bring buckets full of apples to us in October. These were always delicious. They were sour the way that apples grown in colder climates are, and I would eat too many of them.

Because of these experiences, I feel that these apples, and the garden in which they grow, are important, and I think it is important to allow the Finnish countryside to remain such that apple trees can continue to grow and flourish. There is, however, a wealth of experiences that make the apples important to me, and it is difficult to explain in simple terms why I want to protect them. They are important to me partly because I suspect that apples sold in supermarkets can never taste as good as my grandparents'. But it is not only the flavours that make these apples so important. The whole experience of walking in the garden amidst the apple trees plays a part in making the apples important to me. What makes the apples important to me are memories of how I would wait for them to grow during the summer, hoping that the weather would be good and that it would be a good year for them, and how they re-emerge when I eat apples from the garden in winter, defining the present and allowing me to reminisce on the past.

It is because of these experiences that I cannot express how I feel about these apples by trying to think about them purely from the perspective of environmental protection, by trying to communicate the importance of protecting the apples by talking about preserving the environment so that it can continue to produce food and stay a place where people can go to have a break from the life of the city. This is because these apples are not just resources to be consumed by me but the spontaneous growth and flourishing of the apples is more important than this. These apples participate in and enrich my life in ways beyond simple nourishment. The spontaneous growth of the apples feels to me more like a precious gift than a resource. When I try to communicate the importance of these apples, the word that comes to mind is 'nature'. The apples are important because they are a part of nature. It is important to protect these apples because it is important to protect nature.

My feelings about the importance of protecting the apples in my grandparents' garden echo the sentiments of green political thinkers who maintain that we cannot make sense of what is at stake in taking care of our environments without talking about the importance of protecting nature itself (e.g. Barry, 1999; Dobson, 2007; Eckersley, 1992; Naess, 1989). These feelings I have about protecting nature have thus made me interested in green political thinking in an attempt to understand how we might be able to better protect nature. Green thinkers maintain that to best understand what is at stake in taking care of our environments, we need to pay attention to protecting nature. The greens investigate how showing concern for nature begins to change the way that we approach politics and the way we design our political structures.

But at the same time, doubts about this way of thinking of what I feel in the garden began to enter my mind as I examined it in more detail. I began to find it impossible to express why nature is so important to me, and what nature really communicates about the importance of the apples. These kinds of feelings are common. As illustrated by Kate Soper (1995: 1-2), although we use the word 'nature' with ease in our everyday conversation, the word remains

elusive, making it is difficult to explain what we are talking about when we appeal to this concept. Habgood, for example, explores the complexities in talking about nature when thinking about protecting the environments as follows:

> At one extreme, it can include everything that exists, the whole natural world; sometimes this "everything" is held to include humanity, sometimes not. In other context it might mean country rather than town, or the environment, or the world left to itself in contrast with the world as shaped by humanity. It can also describe a force or guiding principle, Nature doing this or that, Mother Nature operating her own laws and thus determining the way things are (Habgood, 2002: 2).

My first instinct would be to say that nature here refers to the nonhuman environment. This is also how the concept of nature is usually understood in green thinking. But on closer examination, it becomes very difficult to think about nature as referring to the nonhuman environment. The apples do not grow spontaneously in my grandparents' garden but have been planted and cultivated by humans. The garden itself is taken care of by humans and only exists because humans decided to build a house and a garden in that spot.

These criticisms have also prompted questions about what green political thinkers are protecting when they say that they are protecting nature, and why the concept of nature seems to be such an important one for them. The aim of this thesis is to address these concerns in more detail, to look at why this concept of nature seems to be so important for the greens, and what it really means to say that what makes green political thinking a distinctive approach to politics is the concern that they show for nature.

Green Political Thought

Green political thinking, with its focus on protecting nature, has become a prominent approach to political theorising. Dobson (2007: 2) elaborates on the green position by making a distinction between green and environmentalist approaches to environmental problems.

More traditional environmentalists investigate environmental problems in terms of resource management. For them, addressing environmental crisis is important because the environment provides resources that are necessary for human well-being. It provides food and energy, as well as opportunities for relaxation and recreation. These kinds of approaches to the environment can be seen, for example, in the ideas of Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of American Forest Service. Pinchot worked to reform the way that American forests were managed so that they could better provide for the needs of man, calling forest management part of the 'one great central problem of the use of the earth for the good of man' (Pinchot, 1972: 322). Pinchot often justified his reforms by making an economic case for the management of these forests and for him, conservation was about 'the foresighted utilization, preservation, and/or renewal of forests, waters, lands, and minerals, for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time' (Pinchot, 1972: 505).

Other environmentalist thinkers make the case for protecting nature from the point of view of human welfare. Barry Commoner (1971) speaks of the protection of the environment for the sake of the well-being of humans. A polluted environment creates 'foul air, polluted water and rubbish heaps', has detrimental effects on human health, makes it harder to grow food and reduces opportunities for recreation (Commoner, 1971: 293). According to Commoner, to avoid pollution and degrading the environment, the environment must be treated with caution. This is because everything is connected to everything else. We cannot dump waste to one part of the earth in the hope that it will disappear: '[n]othing "goes away"; it is simply transferred from place to place' (Commoner, 1971: 40). What is significant in this way of arguing is that it justifies the protection of the environment for the sake of human well-being, drawing attention to the fragility of ecosystems and to the consequences that disturbing these systems can have for human life.

The idea of nature, however, does not play an important part in these environmentalist writings. Although the word 'nature' can appear in environmentalist writings as a way of referring to the environment and to the resources in it, the idea of nature does not become a problem for the environmentalists, and referring to the environment as nature does not alter the content of the environmentalist inquiry. An environmentalist would look at the apples in my grandparents' garden and say that it is important that the countryside remains a place where apples can continue to grow and flourish because it is important for the countryside to continue to provide resources such as food, recreation and clean air to allow humans to live happy and fulfilling lives.

Green political thinkers, however, echo my sentiments that there is something more at stake in protecting the environment. What is at stake is not only protecting the environment as a resource for human ends but also protecting nature itself. Green thinkers understand nature as the nonhuman environment. Unlike environmentalist thinkers, for whom the word 'nature' seems just a synonym for the environment, green thinkers believe that showing concern for nature changes what it means to care for the environment and, therefore, changes the way in which greens approach the kind of politics that can best protect nature. Green thinking has its roots in the 1960s and the 1970s, when books such as Carson's *Silent Spring* (1963), which investigates the impact that pollution has on our environment, and Schumacher's (1993) *Small is Beautiful* and Meadows *et al.*'s (1972) *Limits to Growth*, which question the principles of growth underpinning the capitalist mode of production, doubting that this model can ever provide us with a sustainable mode of consuming goods. These approaches are distinctive because they draw attention to the limits that the earth itself poses to our existence, and begin to approach the question of environmental politics in terms of the limits posed on it by the earth (Dobson, 2007: 15).

Thinking about how our attempts to use nature as a resource have encouraged green thinkers to concentrate on the relationships we share with the natural world. Reflecting on these relationships leads the majority of green thinkers (e.g. Curry, 2006; Eckersley, 1992; Naess, 1989; Devall and Sessions, 1985; Sylvan, 1992) to adopt a doctrine of ecocentrism in order to make sense of our duties towards nature. An ecocentric framework differs from the anthropocentric one adopted by the environmentalist thinkers because ecocentric thinkers believe that it is not only humans who are morally relevant beings, but nonhumans must also be acknowledged as belonging to this group (Eckersley: 1992: 49). Ecocentric thinkers therefore advocate expanding the moral community to include nonhumans. Those green thinkers (e.g. Barry, 1999; Plumwood, 2006) who do not adopt the ecocentric framework still continue to pay attention to the interests of nature. They argue that the interests of humans and of nature are so intertwined that we do not have to separate human and nonhuman interests. Thus, despite differences, the guiding idea in these two approaches remains the same: protecting the environment is not only a question of resource management and there is more at stake in protecting the environment than is recognised by environmentalist thinkers.

This focus on nature is also what makes green thinking a distinct approach to political theory. Unlike environmentalist thinkers, who are concerned with reforming our political structures so that they can better manage environmental resources, green political thinkers maintain that protecting the interests of nature requires that we rethink these structures. This rethinking includes arguments for transforming our democratic systems so that they can better take the interests of nature into account (Eckersley, 2005), rethinking the way in which we organise the economy (Bahro, 1982; Bookchin, 1982; Carter, 1993) and criticising living in big cities, advocating a return to smaller, more self-sustaining communities (Bahro, 1982: 102-5; Sale, 1980) or restructuring the way in which the state and decision-making in it are organised (Barry, 1999; de Geus, 1996).

But although the green project feels important and seems like a significant advancement over the environmentalist way of framing the issue of environmental degradation, the way in which the greens talk about nature remains puzzling. They do not explain what the nonhuman nature that they want to protect is. Thus, it is not surprising that the green way of portraying nature has been criticised by those who maintain that we cannot talk about nature as the nonhuman environment because environments that we conventionally think of as nonhuman exist in such interconnected relations with the ones we conventionally think of as human that we cannot make these divisions into human and nonhuman environments. What comes to count as nature is socially and culturally mediated. Often things that we think of as natural are framed as such through political and ideological struggles; through certain people having an interest in protecting or developing a piece of land, and thinking that through framing this as a part of nature, they can gain support for their cause. It is, therefore, unclear why we should label these beings as natural (e.g. Braun, 2002; Castree: 2001b; Cronon, 1996; Latour, 1993; Smith: 1984; Whatmore, 2002; Whatmore and Thorne, 2000).

Although greens have made attempts to address these concerns, their attempts, as I will demonstrate in Chapter One, have not been entirely successful. Despite this, the concept of nature still seems to continue to play an important role in green politics. Even if the portrayal of nature as some nonhuman environment is problematized, this does not mean that we can just stop talking about nature. There seems to be something about the importance of protecting our environments that cannot be articulated without making references to nature. If I try to explain what I feel when I am walking in my grandparents' garden, looking at the apple trees in bloom, waiting for the arrival of the apples in September without talking about nature, then something important will be left out of this explanation. The questions of what this concept of nature in green thinking refers to and why it seems to be such an important concept, then, remains open.

Approaches

As green thinkers have largely ignored the question of nature, the majority of this thesis will consist of a philosophical exploration into the idea of nature. I will question the role of the concept of nature in green politics by turning to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's philosophy is famously concerned with the question of Being. Thinking about the question of Being is useful for thinking about nature because Heidegger's questioning, particularly the kind of questioning he undertakes in his later writings, contains many environmental themes. In these writings, Heidegger is concerned with how people forget to ask the question of Being, which results in what he calls technological thinking, a kind of thinking that makes demands on the environment. He also describes how, to ask the question of Being, we must allow for the unfolding of the earth and the sky and for the unfolding of nature. Through an engagement with Heidegger's work and by thinking about what the ideas of the earth, the sky and nature refer to in Heidegger's vocabulary, I will argue that protecting nature does help us solve the environmental crisis because, as I will demonstrate later in the thesis, protecting the environment and protecting nature are two different things and protecting nature does not necessarily have environmentally friendly outcomes. We should therefore start thinking of green politics as consisting of these two different goals.

Heidegger's question of Being is concerned with asking what allows beings to appear to us as beings: what is the 'is' that allows us to say that beings are, allows us to grasp beings as beings. Heidegger wants to answer this question without reducing Being to *a* being as has been done throughout the history of philosophy. This began with Plato, who understood Being in terms of his perfect ideas, and continued through to Christianity, which understood Being as a God that created beings, through to Descartes for whom beings are grounded in the knowing human subject who is able to perceive the objective qualities of these beings.

This means that Heidegger is attempting to answer the question of Being by avoiding thinking of it as another kind of being, as something that we can describe, explain or understand as a thing. Because of this way of questioning Being, Heidegger's work consists of ways of thinking about Being that do not arrive at some firm ground that would allow him to articulate a clear and concise definition of Being. In his works Heidegger is also struggling to break free of the kind of philosophical language that aims for these kinds of clear formulations of things and concludes its inquiry by presenting answers to questions formulated at the beginning of the inquiry.

On some level, the question of Being is a question of intelligibility, a question of how beings can appear to us as something intelligible that we can engage with and understand (e.g. Dreyfus, 1991). However, for Heidegger, the question of Being is not only a question of intelligibility but also of unintelligibility. Malpas (2007: 11-12) explains that Heidegger's Being is that which grounds intelligibility and unintelligibility: 'There is a constant play between shadow and light here, between intelligibility and its ground' (Malpas, 2007: 12). Things in the world do not appear to us fully unconcealed and fully intelligible, but always partly in concealment. A large part of the investigation into Heidegger's philosophy presented in this thesis is concerned with this unintelligibility and with the question of what the source of this unintelligibility is.

As will become evident in the thesis, Heidegger's way of questioning Being also offers a useful starting point for my thinking about nature. This is because I feel that the concept of nature does have an important role to play in green politics, and that it communicates something important about green goals, and yet I have difficulties in trying to explain what this concept of nature means and why it is important. The way in which Heidegger approaches language helps us listen to this word 'nature'. Heidegger does not think that we are in charge of language, that we use language as a tool to communicate meanings we can

understand (WL: 126; WS: 246). For Heidegger, we do not always have a clear sense of what the words we use mean. Instead, words themselves speak to us and we must learn to listen to them (NL: 75; WS: 168-9). Heidegger's philosophy, then, allows for listening to the word 'nature', allows the word 'nature' to speak to us and through this, helps us gain a better understanding of the role that this concept of nature plays in green politics.

When I started reading Heidegger, I was drawn, in particular, to his later work, which I thought had the most potential for helping me understand green thinking. In these works, Heidegger describes how philosophy has forgotten to ask the question of Being and how this results in the domination of technological thinking (QCT; FNT; AWP; ZWB). Technological thinking is a kind of thinking which attempts to find ways of representing beings, often through calculations. It sees beings as resources to be used for the sake of creating more resources. Technological thinking, because it is obsessed with manipulating, controlling and understanding beings, forgets to ask the question of Being, to ask what allowed these beings to appear to us as beings in the first place. It thinks that everything in the world can be controlled, mastered and calculated, and does not pay attention to the concealment that accompanies beings appearing to us as beings. It also makes demands on our environments by reducing these environments to calculable resources.

In these later works, Heidegger also offers a way out of technological thinking by describing how we can learn to dwell on the earth (BDT; BWD; Thing; Ding). We learn to dwell, he explains, when we allow for the unfolding of the fourfold that consists of the earth, the sky, the gods and the mortals. To do this, we must allow the earth and the sky to unfold in beings, a process which is partly concealed from us and which we cannot control. We can do this when we accept our own mortality, our finite grasp of beings and their unfolding. When this happens, we allow for the appearance of the gods and things no longer appear to us as mere resources. Instead, they appear to us in a richer way. In addition to talking about the

earth and the sky, Heidegger also introduces environmental themes to his works by talking about *phusis,* the Greek word for 'nature'. When beings are revealed to us through *phusis,* they are revealed on their own accord. For example, a flower bursting into bloom reveals itself to us through *phusis* without human interference.

Because of these references to the unfolding of the earth and the sky and nature, a number of green thinkers have made use of Heidegger's thinking in order to understand how we might best care for our environments (e.g. Holland, 1999; Irwin, 2011; Foltz, 1995; Seckinelgin, 2006; Smith: 2007; Zimmerman, 2003; Young, 2002). In these green interpretations of Heidegger's thinking, nature is understood as describing how certain beings grow and unfold independently, without human interference. The sky and the earth of the fourfold are understood as describing the unfolding of the sky above us and earth on which we dwell that allow for the growth of nonhuman beings, and *phusis* is understood as describing the spontaneous, partly concealed flourishing of a nonhuman nature. The question of Being is understood here in a way that emphasises the unfolding of the material qualities of beings, it is understood as 'the pre-conceptual coming to presence of *material things*, in which we, human beings, only take part' (Joronen, 2012: 629, emphasis mine). In this reading of Heidegger, things are always partly concealed from us because we cannot understand the mysterious unfolding of natural beings. To learn to dwell, to question Being and to protect and take care of the environment, we must refrain from manipulating and controlling natural beings, and allow them to grow and flourish on their own accord. It might seem, therefore, that Heidegger's thinking does not help us discover what nature is because it is still portraying nature as something nonhuman. However, as I will explain in this thesis, I came to abandon this way of reading Heidegger. This is because I realised that thinking about the unfolding of the earth and the concealment that prevails in the world in this manner still leads to technological thinking. So what other ways of thinking about the earth are there?

An interpretation of the earth and the sky, where these terms are not associated with a nonhuman nature, has been proposed by Dreyfus and Spinosa (1997; 2003). This account of dwelling is based on Dreyfus' (1992) reading of Heidegger where Being is understood as the background practices that allow us to make sense of things but remain implicit. In Dreyfus and Spinosa's accounts of dwelling, the earth and the sky are not understood as parts of a nonhuman nature but are understood in terms of these background practices. The sky refers to the context in which we deem certain kinds of behaviours to be suitable, and the earth to the concealed, implicit background practices that we cannot grasp but that nevertheless make it possible for us to make sense of the world. Dreyfus and Spinosa's accounts of dwelling and Being, however, are not free of problems. Others have demonstrated that the background practices that Dreyfus equates with Being are not what Heidegger means by Being. Being is something prior to these practices; it is that which allows these background practices to emerge in the first place (see Keller and Weberman, 1998: 375-6). Dreyfus' way of reading Heidegger, as elaborated by Phillipse (1998: 68-70), is also unable to grasp the mystical elements present in Heidegger's descriptions of the fourfold. So although the argument presented in this thesis will, to some extent, draw on Dreyfus' exposition of Heidegger because it can provide a useful starting point for thinking about the earth and the sky, it will depart from this way of reading Heidegger and find an alternative way of thinking about the earth, the sky and nature.

What, then, do the earth and the sky stand for, and what is nature? Unlike the other ways of thinking about nature, the earth and the sky I have explored here, my account of these concepts will not be able to arrive at a final statement explaining what they stand for. The meanings of nature, the earth and the sky are linked very closely to how Heidegger thinks about Being and, as elaborated earlier, his thinking about Being always remains a questioning, never arriving at an answer. In this thesis, instead of arriving at final definitions

of these concepts, I will pay attention to how Heidegger's philosophy can help us think about them. The purpose of this examination of Heidegger's philosophy, thus, is not to arrive at an alternative definition of the word 'nature', but rather to follow his thought so that we can find ways of thinking about nature. Indeed, this idea of being on the way to thinking was important for Heidegger. He wrote his works as he was on a path to thinking about the question of Being. He called two of his important collections of essays *Wegmarken* which is translated as *Pathmarks,* and *Holzwege,* translated as *Woodpaths.* Heidegger himself said in his later years that his works should be thought of as 'ways – not works' (cited in Kisiel, 1993: p.3). Approaching the concept of nature through Heidegger, then, means that I will not be presenting any exact definition of what nature is, and I will not be outlining any kind of criteria that can help us decide what is to count as natural in the thesis.

My way of thinking about nature also influences the form that my argument takes. Not being able to say what nature is makes talking about the concept of nature problematic. Ben-Dor (2009: 371) describes this problem as '[t]he […] dilemma that Heidegger seems to be oppressed by, that is, how to say without killing the saying by turning it into a "said"'. So the problem which I have is that if I talk and explain too much what nature refers to, then I will no longer be on the way to thinking about Heidegger's nature but I will have started talking about something else. To help me deal with this problem, I will use the apples that grow in my grandparents' garden as an example to illustrate how we can start thinking about nature. This example will also illustrate my own journey of questioning nature that I have undertaken while writing this thesis.

Thinking of Being as something which does not describe the unfolding of nonhuman beings and of concealment as something which does not reside in a set of natural, nonhuman beings themselves will, in the end, allow for a different way of thinking about concealment, the earth, nature and the implications that Heidegger's thinking has for green politics. In the

thesis, my engagement with Heidegger's philosophy will lead me to argue that protecting nature has nothing to do with protecting some nonhuman environment or with preventing environmental degradation. Instead, it is about resisting technological thinking and about learning to dwell. Learning to question the unfolding of nature means to let beings be as they are, not seeing them merely as resources that we can learn to manage and regulate. This will allow us to live richer and more fulfilling lives. This does not mean that preventing environmental degradation is unimportant or something that should not play a part in green politics. Instead, it means that green thinking should be thought of as having two different goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment. These two goals together communicate what is at stake in taking care of our environments.

As a result of this different way of thinking about the earth, the sky and nature, or what Heidegger called by its Greek name *phusis,* I am also emphasising the significance of Heidegger's earlier work, in particular *Being and Time,* to understanding his later work. Environmentalist readings of Heidegger often downplay this link, noting how environmental themes were not prominent in *Being and Time* (Zimmerman, 1990: 159). There are no references to the mysterious unfolding of the earth and the sky in *Being and Time*, and the few references that Heidegger makes to nature here are concerned with nature as a resource (Foltz, 1995: 28). But if the earth, the sky and nature do not refer to unfolding of a nonhuman nature, the inclusion of *phusis* and the earth and the sky in Heidegger's later works does not signify a major revision of his earlier work. What changed in Heidegger later works was the way that he thought about Being. This reading of Heidegger's work is justified by the fact that he himself insisted that the subject matter of his thinking did not change in his later works. *Being and Time* presented a necessary starting point for Heidegger's thinking of Being and his way of questioning changed later because the language he employed in *Being and Time* was inadequate for grasping how beings appear to us as beings (LH: 250; BH: 159).

Because of this, my discussion on Heidegger will begin by examining how he starts to explore the question of Being in *Being and Time* as a way into understanding his later works.

Limits

Because the thesis focuses on thinking about the concept of nature in green politics, there are a number of topics in green politics that the thesis does not touch upon. Some might be suspicious of using Heidegger in order to make sense of green goals and of the attempts of green thinkers to overcome anthropocentrism by according intrinsic value to nature because Heidegger's critics have argued that he himself was unable to overcome anthropocentrism. Heidegger (in)famously claimed in a 1929-30-lecture course *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* that only humans can be thought of as having a world. Here Heidegger (FCM: 185) claims that "the stone is without the world" and "the animal is poor in the world" whereas man is "world-forming". Humans inhabit a historical community that allows for the appearance of the world. The world allows beings to appear to them as beings which they can engage with. But animals encounter the world differently. They are captivated by their environments. An animal can, through this captivation, encounter other beings, but its mode of encounter is different from the human one. The animal can only sense its immediate surroundings, its relationship to the world is determined by its instinctual drives, it does not have access to the beings themselves and it cannot grasp beings as beings (FCM: 249-50). According to Heidegger, then, 'animal existence is a series of blind, non-conceptually mediated, instinctual reactions activated with the animal's meeting up certain entities in its environment' (Schatzki, 1992: 83).

For Heidegger, the animal and the human worlds are separated by an abyss: these two worlds do not differ in the degree of their richness of experience of the world but they differ

in kind: the world of the human is fundamentally different from the world of the animal (Calarco, 2008: 22). This means that Heidegger draws very rigid dividing lines between the human and the animal worlds, he does not investigate the different ways in which different species of animals are in the world and the different degrees to which they can make sense of the world (Elden, 2006a: 275). In addition, living things which are not part of the animal kingdom and non-living beings are not even worthy of investigation in Heidegger's account. This way of thinking about nonhumans seems to be in direct contradiction with green goals. Heidegger's critics argue that the abyss between humans and nonhumans denies that there are similarities between animals and humans and makes communication between different species impossible (see e.g. Oliver, 2009: 206; Aaltola, 2002). Drawing these boundaries also makes possible the arbitrary discrimination of nonhumans because it allows for making distinctions between life that is worthy of respect and life that is not (Wolfe, 2003: 70). It might, then, seem that using Heidegger to think about nature makes it impossible to grasp the significance of the ecocentric arguments.

But what I intend to show in this thesis is that the question of whether we should adopt an ecocentric framework is a question which is separate from the question of nature. This means that whether or not Heidegger gave due consideration to the status of animals and other nonhumans is not relevant for the task of thinking about nature. Although Heidegger's treatment of the human and nonhuman worlds is inadequate, because his philosophy is not meant to help us answer whether or not nonhumans should be seen as intrinsically valuable (see e.g. Foltz: 1992: 88; Smith: 2009: 30-1), this inadequacy in his works does not become a problem. So the question of whether it is desirable to extend the moral community to include nonhumans is not a part of the question of nature that this thesis is addressing, and using Heidegger to think about the concept of nature does not close off any avenues for understanding the role of ecocentrism in green thought. On the contrary, as I will demonstrate

later, this thesis can offer new tools to others for thinking about ecocentrism and anthropocentrism.

The second set of debates in green politics which this thesis will not touch upon are debates on the kinds of political structures that green politics should endorse. My discussion of the concept of nature will not directly inform green politics of the forms of democracy that can best protect the environment and it will not discuss the kinds of economic arrangements that are the most environmentally friendly or the kinds of communities that we should live in order to best protect the environment. In the final chapter, I will briefly discuss what kinds of political structures could best protect nature. But this discussion will be undertaken for the sake of suggesting new avenues for green thinking and demonstrating how green thinkers could approach the question of protecting nature, not for the purpose of providing a rigorous examination of these kinds of political structures. The main aim of the thesis is to inform these debates by attempting to understand when and how we should be talking about nature when thinking about them.

Finally, there are limitations in the manner in which the topic of Heidegger and the political is investigated in the thesis. There has been a lot of discussion concerning Heidegger's engagements with politics and National Socialism in the 1930s and the role that the political plays in Heidegger's writings throughout his works. Although Heidegger only engaged in everyday politics in the 1930s, Heidegger's political project is seen to permeate the whole of his work. Therefore even his early and later works are now seen as a part of the same political project that led him to support National Socialism (e.g. de Beistegui: 1998; Gordon, 2013; Polt, 2006: 227-236; Phillips: 2005).

The thesis engages with this literature concerning Heidegger's engagements with politics and the role that the political plays in his writings, but it does not aim to discuss the role of

the political in Heidegger's writings as such. This is because the thesis is concerned with green politics, and with how Heidegger can guide us in thinking about the everyday practice of green politics. The thesis, then, draws on the literature on Heidegger and the political in so far as this literature can help in thinking about the way in which Heidegger's philosophy could influence the practice of green politics, and about the dangers in using Heidegger to think about this. Therefore, the thesis largely restricts the discussion of Heidegger and politics to examine his practical engagements with politics in the 1930s. It does not examine the role of the political in Heidegger's writings as such, or the role of the political in Heidegger's early or later writings. This is not because these writings are deemed apolitical, but because this thesis concerns itself instead with Heidegger's engagements in the practice of politics in his mid-writings. When thinking about the kind of politics that Heidegger's thinking could guide us towards, the thesis does not aim to think describe any kind of politics that Heidegger himself would have agreed with, but think about a kind of politics aligned with green goals that Heidegger's thinking could guide us towards.

Thesis Structure

The argument of the thesis unfolds in six chapters. Chapter One will begin by looking at green political thinking in more detail. This chapter examines what distinguishes green thinking from more traditional environmentalist concerns and what makes the concept of nature such an important one for green politics. It will identify different ways of approaching the question of nature in green politics and investigate how a concern for nature has been incorporated into green political theory. Ways in which the green conception of nature has been criticised will also be examined, as well as green responses to these criticisms. The chapter will conclude by demonstrating how greens have not been able to fully respond to their critics and by exploring how the role of nature in green politics remains a puzzle.

Chapter Two will then begin examining Heidegger's thinking in order to start thinking about the question of what the concept of nature refers to in green politics. It begins by introducing Heidegger's thinking and investigates ways in which his thinking is often used to make sense of environmental themes. These common green interpretations of Heidegger's thinking concentrate on his examination of *phusis,* the Greek word for nature, and the concealing earth, which plays a role in the happening of truth by always concealing beings from us. In these interpretations, nature is understood in a manner similar to more traditional green thinking. *Phusis* and the earth, in Heidegger's thinking, are seen as referring to the spontaneous growth and flourishing of our nonhuman environments, environments that we cannot fully control and understand. To protect nature, we must protect the spontaneous growing and flourishing of nonhuman natural beings and understand that they are always partly concealed by the earth from which they grow, that we can never fully understand how they grow and develop. By investigating in more detail Heidegger's thinking, the chapter will, however, demonstrate that this way of interpreting him contradicts his account of the happening of truth. It concludes by maintaining that a new way of thinking about nature in Heidegger's work is needed, and suggests that his thinking can have more radical implications for thinking about nature than is commonly acknowledged.

Chapter Three will then undertake a more detailed examination of Heidegger's thinking on *phusis* and the unfolding of the earth. By examining in more detail how he talked about these concepts, the chapter presents a different way of understanding them, a way that no longer equates these concepts with the material growth and development of a set of natural beings, but now sees them as describing how all beings appear to us as beings. The chapter thus argues that the appearance of all beings as beings is the spontaneous growth of nature that green thinkers find so important, not the spontaneous growth and development of the nonhuman environment. This new way of thinking about nature no longer runs into the same

problems and contradictions as the more widespread environmentalist readings of these concepts that were encountered in Chapter Two.

Chapter Four explores the consequences of this way of thinking about nature further and looks at the relationship between practising environmental politics and protecting nature. It does this by examining Heidegger's engagements with politics and by looking at the development of his thinking of the *polis,* the Greek word for city-state. Through these investigations, the chapter demonstrates that we can now divorce thinking about nature altogether from questions of environmental politics. The chapter will also explore further how we can begin to question the unfolding of nature by letting beings be and by learning to dwell on the earth and under the sky.

Chapter Five will investigate the relationship between dwelling, modern technology and tradition. Heidegger often privileged the rural when giving examples of how we might learn to question *phusis* and to allow for the unfolding of the earth. This raises concerns that even the way of approaching nature presented in chapters three and four is still subject to the same criticisms as the green approach to nature was because it privileges older, traditional ways of doing things and environments that we often think of as somehow nonhuman and more natural. But by investigating the roles that technology and tradition play in Heidegger's thinking, the chapter demonstrates that we are not restricted to older, traditional ways of doing things in order to question and protect nature. We can engage with modern, technical devices while still questioning the unfolding of nature, and we can learn to dwell in environments that have been shaped by humans. Although Heidegger himself may not have recognised it, we can allow for the unfolding of the earth even in crowded urban areas.

Chapter Six will then look at how these reflections on the earth and *phusis* in Heidegger's philosophy allow us to make better sense of the role that the concept of nature plays in green

politics. It begins by explaining how these reflections on the concept of nature do not mean that green politics should no longer concern itself with questions of environmental politics. Instead, green politics should be seen as having two different kinds of goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment. The chapter will explore how these two different goals do not have to be seen as completely separate but they can, in some circumstances at least, be mutually reinforcing. It also looks at where in green thinking we can locate this concern for nature and when we should and should not be talking about nature when discussing green concerns. The chapter concludes by investigating how thinking of nature as Heidegger's *phusis* can open up new avenues for questioning and protecting nature in green politics.

Chapter One: Green Politics and Nature

Introduction

This chapter begins to explore what is at stake in addressing environmental problems and in taking care of our environments. Mainstream accounts of environmental politics maintain that addressing environmental problems should be about managing environmental resources. But dissenting green voices paint an alternative picture. Green thinkers maintain that thinking of environmental politics as resource management renders us unable to articulate what is at stake in protecting our environments and that thinking about environmental politics as resource management can even destroy what is interesting and important about our environments. Thinking of our environments as made up of resources which can be used by humans at will sees our environments as objects separate from humans. Greens challenge drawing clear distinctions between humans and nonhumans by maintaining that humans exist in different kinds of interconnected relations with their environments. If we investigate these interconnections, we begin to realise that nonhuman beings share many qualities which were previously reserved only for humans and it thus becomes difficult to draw these distinctions between humans and nonhumans. Therefore, environments are not just made up of objects separate from humans but have their own way of unfolding and flourishing that demand respect (e.g. Eckersley, 1992: 49). If we think about environmental politics only in terms of environmental management, we begin to destroy the spontaneous unfolding of our environments.

Green thinkers often express the importance of preserving this independent unfolding and flourishing they find in our environments by calling it nature, and explain how resource management forgets to look at our relationships with nature, to take care of nonhuman nature and to preserve the naturalness of our environments. Nature, however, is a complicated

concept that can have many different uses, and it is often difficult to explain what it refers to. Because nature is such a complicated concept, it is unclear what it means to investigate our relationships with nature and to protect nature. To better understand the arguments that the greens are making and what is at stake in protecting our environments, this chapter explores the extent to which the idea of nature can guide us to take care of our environments.

The chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I look at green political thought. I explore how showing concern for the relations between humans and nonhumans distinguishes green thinking from more mainstream environmentalism, and consider how green thinkers argue that investigating these interconnections between humans and the environment results in valuing nature for its own sake and in a new way of practising politics. In the second section, I go on to explore the idea of nature further, and explain how nature is not a nonhuman entity that we can accord intrinsic value to. The third section discusses how greens have attempted to grapple with the problems in talking about nature, and how we could explore the relationships we share with our environments without talking about nature. The final section will conclude by asking if talking about the relationships we share with our environments without talking about nature is able to touch upon all that is important in taking care of our environments.

Green Thought

Green political thought, as explained by Dobson (2007), is a distinct approach to political theory that explores how looking at our relationships with the environment can change the way in which we think about politics. It is often contrasted with environmental thinking. Environmentalists, as Dobson (2007: 2) explains, view environmental politics in terms of resource management. According to environmentalists, to help protect the environment, we

can, for example, change our habits of consumptions. To encourage people to do this, we could give private companies more incentives to behave in an environmentally friendly fashion and designate more of the resources of the government to managing the environment (Dobson, 2007: 2).

Greens, however, maintain that the measures proposed by environmentalists are not enough and concentrating on managing our environmental resources can even destroy that which is important about our environments. Nature, in these green writings, is understood as the nonhuman environment. This can be seen, for examples, in Rolston's (1988: 43) description of nature as 'a vast scene of birth and death, springtime and harvest, permanence and change; of budding, flowering, fruiting, and withering away; of processive unfolding; of pain and pleasure, of success and failure; of ugliness giving way to beauty and beauty to ugliness.' Greens incorporate nature into their accounts on politics by investigating the interconnections that exits between humans and nonhumans, maintaining that humans and nonhumans do not exist as separate entities but share many different relations with each other. These relations are examined in many different ways (e.g. Barry: 1999; Eckersley, 1992; Naess 1989; Plumwood, 2006) but what unifies these accounts is demonstrating that we should not view our environments solely as resources but should respect their growth and flourishing.

As Dobson (2007) explains, in addition to paying attention to the importance of nature, investigating the relationships between humans and nonhumans leads greens to differ from the environmentalist position in another important way: investigating these relationships changes the way in which we think about politics. Reforming our political structures is not enough if we wish preserve this spontaneous flourishing of our environments but we need new kinds of political structures to be able to take care of the environment. Thus, green thought can be characterised as a distinct approach to political theory (Dobson, 2007: 3). In

summarising the green position, Dobson explains that green thinking 'holds that a sustainable and fulfilling existence presupposes radical changes in our relationship with the nonhuman natural world, and in our mode of social and political life (Dobson, 2007: 3).

There are many ways in which green thinkers have addressed the question of nature (e.g. Benton, 1992; Goodin, 1992; O'Neill, 1993) but in this chapter, I will focus mostly on ecocentric accounts of green politics. This is because ecocentrism is the most prominent way of using the idea of nature to explain why we should protect our environments. Criticisms that are made of ecocentrism here will be applicable to other approaches to nature as well. Ecocentrics argue that we need to overcome anthropocentric ways of approaching the environment and that we need to start paying greater attention to the interests of nature. Anthropocentrism signifies a kind of thinking which does not show concern for nature itself but values natural resources only in terms of the value they have for humans. It features prominently in the environmentalist approaches to environmental politics which concentrate on how we might better manage natural resources. Ecocentrics argue that the anthropocentric worldview is problematic because it can only give reasons for protecting nature in so far as it serves some purpose for humans and, because of this, it cannot keep any part of nature free from human interference (Sylvan, 2010: 98). It fails to respect the integrity of ecosystems for their own sake, and values them only for the sake of the usefulness they have for humans. To overcome anthropocentrism, ecocentrics argue that we need to start paying greater attention to the interests of nature. This is because, according to ecocentrism, nature has intrinsic value, value in itself, irrespective of the usefulness that natural resources have for humans:

> [E]cocentric theorists argue that there is no valid basis to the belief that humans are the pinnacle of evolution and the sole locus of value and meaning. Instead, ecocentric theories adopt an ethical position that regards *all* of the various multilayered parts of the biotic community as valuable for their own sake' (Eckersley, 1992: 28, emphasis original).

When we begin to recognise the intrinsic value in nature, we begin to treat nature differently and begin to protect nature for its own sake.

According to an ecocentric worldview, intrinsic value is not only accorded to individual nonhuman beings. Instead, ecocentrics adopt a more holistic worldview. They argue that attributing intrinsic value only to distinct entities approaches nature too atomistically and is unable to protect ecosystems and nature as a whole. For example, if intrinsic value were attributed only to individual entities, we would not be able to provide arguments for protecting endangered species. This is because we would attribute the same amount of intrinsic value to a member of a species that was found in nature in abundance as we would to a member of an endangered species (Eckersley, 1992: 47). To avoid these problems, ecocentrics attribute intrinsic value not only to individual entities but also to 'populations, species, ecosystems, and the ecosphere' (Eckersley, 1992: 47, see also Curry, 2006: 63). Thus, the aim of ecocentrism is to preserve whole ecosystems and whole species, not only specific living creatures in these ecosystems.

The ecocentric worldview provides one way of thinking about why I want to protect the apples in my grandparents' garden. According to ecocentrism, my wish to protect the growth and flourishing of these apples is not rooted in thinking that they are valuable for humans. Instead, this belief has its roots in an intuition that the apples are valuable in themselves, and have a right to grow and flourish in their own way. But the details of this ecocentric argument still remain unclear. It is not obvious why I would come to think that the apples have value in themselves, and what the implications of this are.

To answer these questions, I will explore two ways of looking at the relations we share with the nonhuman natural world and two ways of outlining the ecocentric argument in more detail. I will look at an approach which concentrates on deriving rules by which we come to

value nature and at an approach which concentrates on how our experiences of nature guide us towards according intrinsic value to nature. Looking only at two approaches will, of course, limit my analysis, and will leave out other prominent approaches to ecocentrism such as Leopold's (1987) land-ethic and ecofeminism (e.g. Plumwood, 1991; Mies and Shiva, 1993). I have chosen to concentrate on these approaches for two reasons. First, they are popular approaches. Second, they offer two very different ways of thinking about ecocentrism and they thus allow us to explore a wide range of ecocentric arguments, traces of which can also be found in other approaches to ecocentrism.

Rules-based Approach

I will begin exploring ecocentrism by looking at the approach based on deriving rules for valuing nature. I will here rely for the most part on Robyn Eckersley's outline of ecocentrism and on Richard Sylvan's exposition of Deep Green Theory to make sense of this approach. The rules-based approach to ecocentrism attempts to explain ecocentric goals through the language of values, and uses logical reasoning to explain why we should begin to accord intrinsic value to nature (see e.g. Sylvan and Bennet, 1994: 139). The starting point for rules-based ecocentrism is to look at our relationships with our environments, to observe that humans do not exist in the world as isolated entities but share multiple interconnections with the nonhuman world. Eckersley (1992: 49, emphasis original) elaborates by explaining that '[e]cocentrism is based on an ecologically informed philosophy of *internal relatedness,* according to which all organisms are not simply interrelated with their environment, but also constituted by those very environmental interrelationships'. Investigating these interconnections leads to adopting the ecocentric position because it reveals that we can no longer draw simple dividing lines between humans and nonhumans. Eckersley explains this as follows:

> Whatever faculty we choose to underscore our uniqueness of specialness as the basis of our moral superiority […], we will invariably find that there are some humans who do *not* possess this capacity or that there are some nonhumans that *do* (Eckersley, 1992: 49-50, emphasis original).

Because we cannot draw these rigid lines between humans and nonhumans, attributing value solely to humans is arbitrary: ' [n]o simple species or subspecies, such as humans or superhumans, no single feature, such as sentience or life, serves as a reference bench-mark, a base class, for determining moral relevance' (Sylvan and Bennet, 1994: 140). And to avoid arbitrarily according intrinsic value only to humans, we need to accord intrinsic value to nonhumans.

Eckersley goes on to explain that intrinsic value is accorded to all entities having the property of *autopoesis,* the property of 'self-production' or 'self-renewal' (Eckersley, 1992: 60). These are entities that have a 'coherently ordered system of goal-oriented activity that has a constant tendency to protect and maintain the organism's existence' (Taylor, 1986: 122). This capability for self-production distinguishes living entities from machines. Machines might share some similarities with autopoetic entities because they behave in a purposeful manner, but they are different because their end goal is a goal that is external to them, their goal is not the renewal or the reproduction of the self (Eckersley, 1992: 60-1). Because populations, species and ecosystems can all be thought of as self-producing systems, this approach also allows us to accord intrinsic value to whole populations, to different species, and to ecosystems, in addition to individual autopoetic entities (see also Katz, 1997: ch. 3; Morito, 2003).

According intrinsic value to autopoetic entities now helps us move away from the anthropocentric worldview and allows us to find a new way of comporting ourselves towards the environment. Eckersley (1992: 28) explains that the ecocentric worldview inserts elements of empathy and caution into our relationships with nature. When we begin to focus

on the interconnections between humans and nonhumans, we begin to understand that nature has its own, complicated system of unfolding and flourishing. We recognise that nature is so complicated we can never control or regulate it. We also understand that because nature has intrinsic value, we should not attempt to control nature even if we could (Board, 2002: 45).

So what would thinking about nature in this manner mean for protecting the apples in my grandparents' garden? Because we cannot draw clear dividing lines between the human and the natural world, the apple trees now have intrinsic value. The apple trees, as parts of nature and as autopoetic entities, are be valuable for their own sake and must be protected irrespective of the uses they might have for humans.

However, the practical implications of this approach to ecocentrism that tries to establish rules by which we can extend our moral community to include nonhumans become ambiguous when we begin to think about them in more detail. It is easy to think of a situation where our interest would clash with the interest of the apple trees. For example, could we, when cold, use the wood from the tree for fire? The practical implications of ecocentrism, then, are not self-evident because we cannot always, at all times, accord intrinsic value to all natural beings.

For ecocentrism to guide us in the way in which we practise politics, we must have some means with which to solve these conflicts of interest. To deal with these conflicts, ecocentrics often rank beings according to how much intrinsic value they have. Eckersley maintains that in order achieve this ranking, 'the degree of sentience of an organism and its degree of self-consciousness and capacity for richness of experience are all relevant factors (as distinct from exclusive criteria) in any ethical choice situation alongside other factors such as whether a particular species is endangered' (Eckersley: 1992: 57).

Ranking entities in this manner does not mean that we are reverting back to anthropocentrism, it does not mean that the interests of humans always trump the interests of nature because humans have a higher degree of sentience than nonhumans (Curry, 2006: 64). This is because, as Sylvan (1992: 222) explains, although value is distributed irregularly in nature, this does not mean that value is accorded to beings solely through an isolatable feature such as sentience. Instead, we must take the complex contexts in which beings exist into account. Thus, the interests of humans are not automatically valued higher than the interests of nature. As a guideline for deciding when we should take the interests of nonhuman nature into account and sacrifice our own interests, Eckersley explains that we need 'to choose the course that will minimize […] harm and maximize the opportunity of the widest range of organisms and communities – *including ourselves* – to flourish in their/our own way' (Eckersley, 1992: 57, emphasis original). Or, as outlined by Sylvan and Bennet (1994), what is needed is a change in our outlook and perspective and a shift in the burden of proof: '[w]hat is required now is that reasons be given for interfering with the environment rather than reasons for not doing so' (Sylvan and Bennet, 1994: 147). So this means that we can eat apples to nourish ourselves, but we must always give good reasons for consuming these apples. For example, destroying a large area of a local ecosystem in order to begin growing apples for profit would not be allowed.

Adopting an ecocentric worldview also has an impact on how we conduct politics. Environmental politics must now be able 'to protect threatened populations, species, habitats and ecosystems *where-ever situated* and irrespective of their use value or importance to humans' (Eckersley, 1992: 46, emphasis original). There are two practical implications that arise from this kind of attitude. First, we begin to show more concern for protecting wilderness. Ecocentrics support 'the preservation of large tracts of wilderness as the best means of enabling the flourishing of a diverse nonhuman world' (Eckersley, 1992: 44, see

also Mackey, 2004: 88). The reasons ecocentrics give for protecting wilderness areas are different from the reasons environmentalists have for protecting these areas. Ecocentrics promote the protection of wilderness for the sake of the organisms living in these areas, not for the sake of the recreational or economic uses that these areas may have for humans.

The second way in which the ecocentric worldview impacts our conduct of politics concerns the size of the human population. Reducing the number of humans living on the planet is an efficient way of scaling down our levels on consumption and thus, ecocentrics often advocate a reduction in human birth-rate (Sylvan and Bennet, 1994: 223-5; see also Dobson, 2007: 75-8). Because of this, some have accused ecocentrism of misanthropy. It is true that there are some more misanthropic strands of ecocentrism (see e.g. Linkola, 2002), but these views are in a minority. A majority of ecocentrics care for the flourishing of humans but also argue for a drop in the birth rate of humans in order to allow other species to grow and flourish as well: '[e]cocentric theorists see each human individual and each human culture as just as entitled to live and blossom as any other species, *provided* they do so in a way that is sensitive to the needs of […] other life-forms (Eckersley, 1992: 56, emphasis original). So, for example, it is not against the ecocentric principles to kill a wild animal attacking a human (Eckersley, 1998). We are only guilty of anthropocentrism if there is a possibility of reconciling the interests of humans and nonhumans and we ignore this possibility (Eckersley, 1998: 177).

Proponents of the rules-based approach to ecocentrism also concentrate on how taking the interests of nonhuman nature into account changes the way we conduct politics. Eckersley (2002), for example, outlines what a green state that is able to protect the interests of nonhumans might look like. These reflections on politics draw on political theory in order to understand how political structures could be transformed, and here the rules-based approach to ecocentrism itself does not directly inform us of the kinds of political structures that could

help us protect wilderness, reduce human birth-rate and protect nature. Ecocentrism can only tell us that nature should be protected, and that this goal should feature in the green agenda. I will return to discussing the kinds of political structures that have been proposed to help us accomplish these ecocentric goals later in the chapter. I will now move on to examine the second way of outlining the ecocentric argument, the approach based on our experiences of nature.

Experience-based Approach

The experience-based approach provides a different way of exploring the relationships we share with the nonhuman world, and a different justification for according intrinsic value to nonhumans. It does not concentrate on the rules by which we begin to value nature but concentrates on how our experiences of nature can lead us to accord intrinsic value to nonhumans. This approach features most prominently in the arguments of deep ecologists. Deep ecology was first introduced by Arne Naess, and has been developed further by Devall and Sessions (1985), and Warwick Fox (1990). My account of deep ecology here will rely on the most part on Naess' influential formulation of deep ecology.

Similarly to those who rely on finding rules for valuing nature, the starting point for deep ecology's questioning is to investigate the relationship between the human and the nonhuman world. However, deep ecology's focus on investigating these relationships is different from that of the rules-based approach. Instead of attempting to find strict rules for how we should value nature, deep ecology focuses more on how the experiences that we have of these relationships changes the way in which we relate to nature. Experiences are important because deep ecologists do not think that things in the world exist as isolated objects. Instead, they are always parts of larger wholes. These larger wholes are something that cannot be explained with logical reasoning but are something that we must experience. So what does this mean?

As an example of these larger wholes Naess (1989) looks at music, and explains that a note in a piece of music is only experienced as something beautiful when it is heard in the context of the whole piece. The environment in which we listen to the piece also impacts on how we experience it (Naess, 1989: 58). Naess thus maintains that 'things cannot be separated from what surrounds them without smaller or greater arbitrariness' (Naess, 1985: 45). Naess wants us to start thinking about our environments in a similar manner, as wholes, and wants us to start thinking how we only exist as a part of these wholes. Naess explains that 'A human being is not a thing in an environment, but a juncture in a relational system without determined boundaries in time and space' (Naess, 1989: 79). But because these larger wholes are complicated, we cannot explain or understand them. Instead, we must experience them. Thus, we are a part of our environments, connected to animals, plants and ecosystems, to nature, and we can only grasp these larger wholes through our experiences of them (Naess, 1989: 79).

Thinking of ourselves as parts of larger wholes changes the way in which we comport ourselves towards the environment. Because we are not atomistic individuals, we can no longer think of our interests in terms of narrow self-interests. Through our identification with nature, we come to notice how our interests and our satisfaction in life are linked to the interests of nature: 'joy becomes, not *my* joy, but *something joyful* of which the I and something else are interdependent, non-isolatable fragments' (Naess, 1989: 60-1, emphasis original). As a result of this realisation, we acquire a 'deep seated respect, even veneration, for ways and forms of life', recognise that humans and nonhumans have 'an equal right to live and blossom', and begin to accord intrinsic value to nature (Naess, 1973: 95-96). A deep ecologist thus 'cares for and about nature, loves and lives with nonhuman nature, is a person in the "earth-household" and "lets beings be", lets nonhuman nature follow separate evolutionary destinies' (Devall, 1980: 303).

So how does this approach help make sense of why I feel that the apples in my grandparents' garden are important? Focusing on these larger wholes demonstrates that the apples are not just fruits with certain colours, weights and nutritional values. Instead, they are a part of a larger whole, and what counts is how I experience them in this larger whole. I cannot explain why the apples are so important to me through scientific language or through the language of values, but I can try to convey this by talking about how I experience them. As I take an evening walk in the quiet garden amidst the apple trees, listening to the leaves rustling in the wind, looking forward to autumn when the apples can be picked, I experience myself as a part of a larger whole, and the apples as a part of me. I want to take care of the apples because our interests are the same.

But although looking at these experiences of larger wholes tells something about why the apples are important to me, similarly to the rules-based approach, the practical implications of deep ecology are not self-evident. Experiencing ourselves as a part of a larger whole leads quickly to conflicts of interest that are similar to the kinds that the rules-based approach ran into. For example, it is unclear if I should use the wood from the tree for firewood and hurt the tree, an entity that I experience as being a part of me.

Naess does recognise that according intrinsic value to nonhumans can be contradictory, and that we cannot always attribute intrinsic value to everything. To solve these conflicts, Naess explains that we should accord intrinsic value to all parts of nature in principle while, at the same time, recognising that 'any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploitation and suppression' (Naess, 1973: 95). Critics have, however, argued that according intrinsic value to natural beings only in principle falls back to the anthropocentric position. It now seems that experiencing ourselves as parts of larger wholes is only a general principle and in practice we can ignore these experiences and hurt our environments (Humphrey, 2002: 61-4;

Katz, 2000: 36-7; Lee, 2009). So can Naess offer us some code of conduct that would prevent this experience-based approach from becoming anthropocentric?

Naess does not offer these codes of conduct, but this omission brings us to an important point in how Naess thinks our experiences can guide us toward protecting nature. Although Naess' account lacks codes of conduct for valuing nature, his formulation of deep ecology does not fall back into an anthropocentric position. Rigid codes of conduct are not needed in order for deep ecology to avoid anthropocentrism because, once we experience ourselves as a part of the wider environment, these codes will come to us naturally (Fox, 1990: 217). Thus, deep ecology's guidelines for protecting nature are based on our intuitions concerning the value inherent in nature, intuitions which we gain when we experience ourselves as a part of the wider environment (Rothenberg, 2000: 157; Milton: 2002: 74-6). There are no sets of rules that can guide us towards resolving the contradictions arising from according intrinsic value to nature. Instead, we rely on our experiences and intuitions to resolve these contradictions. So, as Fox (1990: 76) explains, experiencing ourselves as a part of a larger whole leads to a different kind of non-anthropocentrism than was discussed in the case of Eckersley and Sylvan. This kind of non-anthropocentrism focuses on our own self-realisation, on learning how we are a part of a larger whole. Through this, instinctively, without rules and codes of conduct, we come to value nature for its own sake. So how, then, do these experiences guide us towards protecting nature?

Naess (1989: 85, emphasis original) maintains that we protect nature when we learn to perform what he calls beautiful acts:

> A person acts beautifully when acting benevolently from inclination. Environment is then not felt to be something strange or hostile which we must unfortunately adapt ourselves to, but something valuable which we are *inclined to* treat with joy and respect, and the overwhelming richness of which we are inclined to use to satisfy our vital needs.

Naess illustrates how these beautiful acts are not rooted in logical or scientific arguments by looking at the reasons that a conservationist, who has experienced himself as a part of a larger whole, and a developer, who still has an anthropocentric worldview, might give for building a road through a forest. The conservationist does not want the road to touch the centre of the forest but has difficulties explaining what this means to the developer:

> A conservationist sees and experiences a forest as a unity […], and when speaking of the *heart of the forest,* he or she does not speak about the geometrical centre. A developer sees quantities of trees and argues that a road through the forest covers very few square kilometres compared to the whole area of trees, so why make so much fuss (Naess, 1989: 66, emphasis original)?

Thus, our experiences of nature guide the way in which we perform beautiful acts, and we can never coherently express these experiences through the language of values.

Developing ourselves and learning to perform beautiful acts also means that we do not have to sacrifice our own interests in order to take the interests of nature into account. Beautiful acts are undertaken because one is inclined to act in a certain manner, not because we feel that we have a moral duty to perform these acts (Naess, 2003: 67). Naess (1989) looks at cycling as an example. As we begin to reflect on our larger selves, we might decide to take up cycling. But we do not choose to cycle because we decide to give something up in order to protect the environment. Instead, we choose to cycle because of the pure joy we experience when pushing the pedal, because of the joy of experiencing cycling (Naess, 1989: 76). This means that to act beautifully in my grandparents' garden, we can still pick apples to nourish ourselves. But have to let our experiences of nature guide the manner in which we harvest these apples, we should preserve the heart of the place where the apples grow. Having a scientist explain to us how we can harvest apples sustainably does not yet guarantee that we are protecting nature and acting beautifully, we must rely on our own experiences of the garden for knowledge how to act.

But what kinds of political structures can help us experience ourselves as a part of a larger whole? To learn to experience the intrinsic value in nature, we need to live in nature, to interact with it in our everyday lives. Naess explains that '[t]o only "look at" nature is extremely peculiar behaviour. Experiencing of an environment happens by doing something in it, by living in it, meditating and acting' (Naess, 1989: 63). So this means that political structures must now be able to encourage these practical, everyday interactions with the natural environment that allow us to experience ourselves as a part of a larger whole. Much as in the rules-based approach, the protection of wilderness areas is emphasised: wilderness is where we can experience the wholeness of nature, it allows for 'understanding how the mountains, the rivers, fish and bear continue on their own actualisation process' (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 110). Deep ecologists also advocate a reduction in the birth-rate of humans because this would allow the nonhuman world to flourish in addition to the human world (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 72).

But these reflections that deep ecologists make on politics go further than the reflections of those who advocate a rules-based approach to ecocentrism. Differing from the rules-based approach, in the accounts of deep ecologists, our experiences of nature can directly inform us of the kinds of political structures that can help us protect nature. Deep ecologists thus go on to discuss the kinds of political structures that can help us protect nature. Naess suggests that place-based politics is well-suited for realising deep ecological values because it allows for more influence in the political decisions which shape our lives, thus allowing for more self-determination and self-development (Naess, 1989: 142-3). Devall and Sessions (1988) also argue that cultivating ecological sensibilities means that politics must be place-based. This is because developing intimate connections with the land allows us to experience and learn lessons from nature. We can, for example, learn cultural practices from nature: '[r]ituals, art forms, distinctive ways of living and specialised terminology referring to land forms or

weather of relationships with the landscape' (Devall, 1988: 64). These cultural practices help us live in harmony with other humans and with the landscape we inhabit (Devall, 1988: 65). Deep ecologists thus argue for developing an identity rooted in particular areas of the land, allowing nature to guide us in our decisions concerning what kinds of local communities would be most appropriate for us to live in (Callicott, 1997: 179, see also Devall and Sessions, 1985: 98; Devall, 1988: 57-69). Naess and Devall and Sessions, however, refrain from making any more detailed suggestions over the organisation of politics in these placed-based communities. Because deep ecology's emphasis is on our own self-realisation and growth, people must reflect on these questions themselves and draw on their own experiences of nature to find answers to them (Devall and Sessions, 1985: 158).

Although not strictly a deep ecologist, Kirkpatrick Sale (1985) shares a lot with deep ecology and has discussed in more detail how our experiences of nature can guide our conduct of politics by introducing the idea of bioregionalism. Bioregionalism advocates a place-based politics where the places in which we live are divided into different bioregions, into areas that are distinctive due to their natural characteristics. Bioregionalism strives to organise politics in such a way that we can live in harmony with the surrounding nature. It emphasises knowing the land in which we live, becoming 'conscious of the birdsongs and waterfalls and animal droppings', gaining a better understanding of the specific location we should grow our food in and what resources the area has to offer for us (Sale, 1985: 44). Bioregionalism promotes the consumption of local foods and the usage of local materials, and is highly suspicious of modern technology. It is an interesting approach to green politics because it rests on an idea that we can learn from nature the best way to live in our surroundings (Dobson, 2007: 92). As Sale explains it, 'our best wisdom does not come from without, but arises in the soul and is an emanation of the Earth spirit, a voice speaking

directly to us dwellers in this land' (Sale, 1985: 41). So here, it is primarily our experiences of nature that are guiding the way in which we conduct politics.

Social Construction of Nature

Discursive Mediation of Knowledge

So far these accounts of the importance of thinking about nature and the relationships we share with the natural environment seem reasonable. Ecocentric thinkers argue that the richness of the environment can only be preserved by according intrinsic value to nature and by recognising that according intrinsic value to nature changes the way in which politics should be practised. However, problems surface in these arguments when we begin to explore in more detail what the nature that ecocentrics are keen to protect is. The introduction already mentioned that nature is a complicated concept. I will here begin to explore some of these complexities in more detail and look at the kinds of challenges that these complexities pose to ecocentric thinkers. The idea that there is some homogenous nature we can protect has been challenged by those who adopt a constructivist approach to thinking about nature and argue that nature is not a nonhuman entity which has intrinsic value. Instead, nature is social. As Castree (2001a) outlines, there are two ways in which we can think of nature as social. First, nature is social because we cannot have neutral representations of nature, because the knowledge that we have of nature is socially mediated. And, second, nature is social because it has been materially produced by humans.

So, how is our knowledge of nature socially constructed? Cronon (1996) famously illustrates this by looking at how the notion of wilderness is employed in green thinking. Often, as was already seen in deep ecology's accounts of nature, greens see nature as a place of peace and harmony. Cronon, however, demonstrates how this idea of wilderness is socially

constructed by looking at American National Parks. The preservation of American National Parks was inspired by the idea of a wild, pristine nature which needs to be preserved so that people living in urban environments can reconnect with it. But Cronon goes on to explain that nature has not always been thought of in this manner. Wilderness can mean many things for us, and in the past it was often seen as something dangerous and undesirable (Cronon, 1996: 70-1). Only through Romanticism and frontier ideology did wilderness come to be understood as untouched nature, as the last place where human civilisation has not yet damaged the earth, as the place where humans can live in harmonious relationships with the earth (Cronon, 1996: 73-9). Cronon thus suggests that this kind of a representation of nature as a place of peace and harmony does not describe nature as it is, but is a culturally mediated idea of what nature is like.

Thinking about how our knowledge of nature is culturally mediated also allows for a different way of thinking about why the apples in my grandparents' garden are so important to me. It suggests that it is not some nonhuman nature that guides me to protect these apples. Instead, the apples are important because of socially and culturally mediated understandings of what they are. The apples remind me of the numerous pleasant occasions when I visited my grandparents in my childhood. The way I see these apples is also influenced by a romantic view of the countryside as a place where I can escape the noisy city, experience some of the peace and quiet of nature, and return to some older, traditional ways of doing things. So it now seems that the apples are not important to me because they are a part of nature but they are important because they embody all these different socially mediated meanings.

Investigating how our knowledge of nature is socially constructed poses problems for the ecocentrics who claim to be protecting the interests of nature. It is particularly problematic for deep ecologists. As was discussed earlier, deep ecology wants to focus on the experiences

that give us intuitions about nature. These experiences are gained without any mediating structures or abstract knowledge that might distort them (Goodwin, 2009: 165). But looking at how our knowledge of nature is socially constructed calls into question what the nature that deep ecologists experience really is. When deep ecologists are claiming that they are learning lessons from nature, is it the non-human nature that teaches these lessons or is it a culturally mediated understanding of what nature is that is teaching us?

Ignoring how our knowledge of nature is discursively mediated, assuming that we can learn lessons from nature, can be problematic and can have adverse effects for the way in which we protect the environment. It has, for example, led some green thinkers to assume that there exists an automatic link between indigenous practices and between protecting the environment (see Sagoff, 1996). Although indigenous populations have often developed intimate knowledge of their surroundings and might have some knowledge of what is required to take care of their environments, we should not equate sustainability with indigenous practices. As Gregory (2001: 90) explains, indigenous populations did not exist in perfect ecological equilibrium prior to colonialism: famine, deforestation and environmental degradation existed before colonialism. Making the link between indigenous practices and protecting the environment becomes even more difficult with contemporary environmental problems that have been produced through complex global networks, which transform these environments and put new pressures on them (Brown, 2009: 37). There are also challenges in determining what counts as local knowledge and how we define something as local (Forsyth, 2003: 188-186-8). This does not mean that local knowledge is not important, that indigenous populations have not developed intimate understandings of how their environments function, but it means that having this intimate sense of place does not automatically lead to sustainable practices.

Some green thinkers have rejected the ecocentric framework because they think deep ecology's account of nature relies on socially constructed ideas of nature as a place of peace and harmony. These greens argue that we cannot derive meanings from nature because nature is meaningless, complex and unpredictable. John Barry (1999: 19) elaborates on this and explains that instead of nature being a homogenous, harmonious entity, nature is

> characterised by uncertainty, contingency and possible catastrophe, partly as a result of human transformative interests and practices, partly because of the limits to human knowledge of the world […] and partly because nature itself poses threats to our existence through "natural disasters" .

With the environment being so unpredictable and complex, we can find different qualities within it. The environment can sometimes be stable and sometimes changing, sometimes unpredictable, causing great suffering, and sometimes peaceful and nurturing. We cannot know nature, and any meanings that we do find from it are not lessons that have been taught to us by nature but are, in fact, our own social constructions (de-Shalit, 2000: 100). Experiencing nature, learning from nature, then, cannot teach us how we should organise our lives and how we could learn to exist sustainably (see Taylor, 2000: 281-285).

Critics of deep ecology have also argued that deep ecology's focus on how nature's harmony and stability can guide our actions has meant that deep ecology is unable to make itself politically relevant. De-Shalit (2000: 46-7) maintains that deep ecology is not interested in protecting the environment at all. This is because it focuses on our experiences of the environment and on developing ourselves as a result. Deep ecologists are not seeking to address real environmental concerns, problems such as pollution and the extinction of wild animals (de-Shalit, 2000: 52). Barry (1999), in a similar vein, argues that focusing on nature as a harmonious entity does not pay attention to the contingent and shifting relationships we share with the environment, and to how we could begin to live more sustainable lives today. Instead, deep ecologists dream of utopian communities that are able to live in perfect harmony with nature in some distant future (Barry, 1999: 19-20).

A rules-based approach to ecocentrism is better equipped to deal with the constructivist criticisms. This is because it does not claim to be able to learn lessons from nature but simply acknowledges that nature has intrinsic value that should be protected. As Eckersley remarks, '[n]on-human nature knows no human ethics, it simply *is*' (Eckersley, 1992: 59, emphasis original). This means that, as was explained earlier in the chapter, for the rules-based approach, it is up to political theory to think about the kinds of structures which can best protect the interests of nature; nature itself cannot guide us in these decisions. This also means that constructivist arguments can be incorporated into rules-based ecocentric thinking and can even support these arguments. Curry (2008: 7) explains that acknowledging that nature has been discursively constructed does not yet mean that nature is only a human construct because natural beings can also participate in creating meanings. Therefore, looking at these constructed meanings can teach us something about nature itself. Accepting that our knowledge of nature is culturally mediated can also encourage us to allow nature to flourish in its own way and to treat it with caution:

> Indeed, the acknowledgement that the only nature that we know is a provisional, socially constructed "map" that is at best only an approximation of the "real territory" provides the basis of a number of cautionary tales as to how the "emancipatory project" might be pursued […] if it is acknowledged that our understanding of nature is incomplete and culturally filtered and provisional *then* we ought to proceed with care, caution, and humility rather than with recklessness and arrogance in our interactions with "nature" (Eckersley, 2002: 64-5, emphasis original).

Constructivist arguments can guide ecocentrics to be more careful about the kinds of knowledge claims they make about nature, and can encourage ecocentrics to listen to a plurality of voices when thinking about how to best protect nature. Through this, they can provide reasons for paying attention to the complexity of nature and for treating it with caution.

This would mean that we could continue to protect the apples in my grandparents' garden and accord intrinsic value to them even if our knowledge of the apples is discursively mediated. We now have to pay attention to how this knowledge is constructed, learn to listen

to different voices about the apples and through this, attempt to get closer to what the apples really are. This will allow us to better understand how we can protect them. But looking at how our knowledge of nature is discursively mediated is not the only way in which we can understand nature as being social. Nature can also be understood as social because it has been materially produced by humans. Looking at this aspect of the construction of nature poses more serious challenges to rules-based ecocentric thinking.

The Production of Nature

So what does it mean to say that humans have materially produced nature? Neil Smith (1984), who explores the question of nature from a Marxist perspective, coined the phrase 'the production of nature'. Smith demonstrates how capitalist processes of accumulation order and mould our environments in order to incorporate them into capitalist systems of production (Smith, 1984: 47-6). Capitalism can transform landscapes in many ways. For example, forests are managed so that we can extract timber from them, land is used for farming to feed populations, and some areas of the environment are conserved in order to attract tourism. Accounts of the material production of nature have gained popularity and now extend beyond the Marxist framework. They demonstrate that capitalist processes alone are not responsible for producing nature, but scientific knowledge and technological innovations, for example, also participate in these processes (Castree, 2001b).

Concentrating on the material production of nature reveals that there are, in fact, very few places on the earth which have not been shaped by human actions. The national parks discussed by Cronon, which are usually thought of as natural, nonhuman environments, have, in fact, been constructed and maintained by humans (Cronon, 1996: 81-3). Cronon also demonstrates that countryside areas, which are often thought of as being more natural than urban areas, have, in fact, been produced and shaped by the same processes which sustain cities (Cronon, 1991). These kinds of arguments can be made about almost any entity that we

might think of as being natural. Braun (2009: 20, see also Demeritt, 2002; Hinchliffe, 2008) explains that entities such as plants and animals, which we conventionally think of as part of nature, have evolved and changed by interacting with human societies and technologies. Because humans have produced that which they call nature, it no longer makes sense to talk of nature as something nonhuman. We can of course argue that there are still areas where pristine nature does exist. For example, below the surface of the earth there is matter that has not been shaped by humans. But as demonstrated by Smith (1984), this does not undermine the production of nature thesis. These pristine areas are pristine only because they are inaccessible to humans, humans will never know these pristine environments and 'have produced whatever nature became accessible to them' (Smith, 1984: 57). This argument about the material production of nature is particularly important in the contemporary context where, due to advances in technology, humans are now transforming the whole planet, even its climate, leading some to postulate that we now live in the era of Anthropocene. Disciplines such as ecology and geology can no longer claim to be studying 'natural' processes but they must also take into account how human technologies and activities shape the earth (Crutzen, 2002; Steffen *et al.*, 2011). So what does this mean for the way in which we think about nature?

Bruce Braun explores how recognising that humans produce nature means that we can take the constructivist arguments explored previously further. He argues that because nonhuman nature does not exist, our representations of nature are not something that we can strip away to reveal what nature really is like. Instead, ideological and cultural representations of nature are always needed for us to be able to talk about nature. Braun (2002, see also Braun and Wainwright, 2001) illustrates this by looking at how our understandings of rainforests in British Columbia have been constructed through historically specific discourses. The forest corporation that wants to use these forests for timber is keen to portray itself as practising

sustainable forestry. To achieve this, it produces an image of the forests as something wild, untouched by humans, which can be known and managed through scientific knowledge (Braun, 2002: 36-8). Environmentalists who oppose the forestry rely on a different framing of the forests. They frame the forests as a place of wilderness, as pure nature that has not been shaped by human culture, and should be left untouched (Braun, 2002: 88-103). But both of the depictions of these forests are produced to serve the interests of the parties that made them and exclude other ways of thinking about them. In particular, Braun highlights how these representations ignore the indigenous populations living in the forests. The framing of the forest corporation does this by not addressing these populations at all. The framing of the environmentalist groups does this by framing the indigenous populations as a part of nature, as a part of wilderness and as something primitive.

Because the pristine, natural forests do not exist, Braun argues that the rainforests only come into being as rainforests through these different kinds of representations. For the rainforests to exist, knowledge of them has to be produced through ideological struggles. Thus, Braun concludes that 'there are many forests, not one; there are myriad ways in which the physical worlds of the west coast are imbued with meaning and intelligibility' (Braun, 2002: 258-9). We cannot talk about the forests as nature without culturally mediated understandings of what these forests are. There are no forests and no nature prior to the representations of forests and natures. We should consequently engage in questioning how the entities we think of as natural came to be understood as such in the first place, and examine the exclusions that these representations inevitably entail (Braun, 2002: 259).

Many different ideas are used to produce what we call 'nature', but the idea of something traditional as a part of nature is so common that it is worth exploring it in some detail. These romantic portrayals of nature often contain a yearning for past times and a need to connect with past traditions (Soper, 2011: 23). As a consequence, places are often framed as natural,

not through representing them as something untouched by humans, but by representing them as something old or traditional. As illustrated by Williams (1980: 77-79), environments that have been explicitly built and developed by humans come to be labelled by us as traditional, natural environments that need to be protected and preserved just as we wish to protect some 'nonhuman' nature. Macnaghten and Urry explain:

> The rows of terraced housing thrown up during nineteenth-century capitalist industrialisation are now viewed not as an environmental eyesore, but as quaint, traditional and harbouring patterns of human activity well worth preserving. The shifts in reading are even more remarkable in the case of the steam engine in Britain, whose belching smoke is now almost universally viewed as natural, as almost part of the environment (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998: 19).

Thus, many of the environments that we often think of as being natural are human environments framed as natural because they are seen as traditional.

This also means that the apples in my grandparents' garden do not belong to a nonhuman nature. These apples have been planted in the garden by humans, the species of apple that grow there have been bred by humans and the garden in which the apples grow is taken care of by humans. I only think of the apples as a part of nature because of culturally mediated understandings of what counts as nature, which allow for thinking about gardens and the countryside as a part of nature. Part of the reason why I think of these apples as natural might also be because I associate them with particular kinds of traditional ways of existing in the countryside.

The idea that nature is materially constructed by humans challenges the rules-based approach to ecocentrism. Because nature is materially produced, contrary to what Eckersley claims, there is no truth of nature that we can get closer to by examining different views of what nature is like. Instead, cultural understandings and representations are always needed for us to talk about nature. The socially mediated meanings about the apples in my grandparents' garden are not something that can be stripped away. We cannot get closer to what apples, as natural beings, really are like by reflecting on different understandings of apples. An apple

only is an apple, a part of nature, because of socially mediated understandings of what counts as an apple and a natural being. There is nothing about the apple itself that makes it natural.

If things that we normally understand as natural have been shaped by humans and if our understandings of which beings count as natural are always products of ideological struggles, if, as Castree (2005: 35) puts it, what gets labelled as natural is down to human convention, then this raises the question of why we should accord intrinsic value to that which we call nature. According intrinsic value to entities that we deem natural now seems arbitrary, and can pose problems to the way in which we practise environmental politics. Cronon, for example, is concerned that focusing on nonhuman nature and on protecting wilderness results in shrinking the scope of environmental politics. As we begin to concentrate on protecting areas that can be made to appear as natural, we ignore areas that cannot be portrayed in this manner. Focusing too much on the idea of nature, then, fails to look at how we should protect and care for those environments in which we live that are not part of what we think of as nature (Cronon, 1996: 89-90). This would, then, suggest that we should stop talking about protecting nature altogether. Timothy Morton (2007; 2010), for example, argues that environmental politics should no longer be about protecting nature but it should investigate the relationships that humans have with their environments. The concept of nature, for Morton, is dangerous, because it is an ideologically motivated concept that obfuscates what really is at stake in protecting our environments.

There are, however, good reasons for why ecocentrics are unwilling to let go of the idea of nature. Many are concerned that if we stop talking about nature and maintain that our environments have been produced by humans, we revert back to the environmentalist position. We will think that we can manage and mould our environments endlessly at will, and we will continue to view the environment as a resource to be consumed (Bailey, 2005; Dryzek, 2005: 53-63; Taylor, 1993). Soule (1995: 155-6, see also Proctor, 1998), for

example, explains that although humans have modified nature, nature still has its own way of unfolding spontaneously, independently of human involvements, and it is important to pay attention to this spontaneity if we want to take care of our environments. Sessions (2006), in a similar vein, argues that the constructivist arguments do not take into account that there are real entities in the world, entities that make up a part of the earth's life-support system, which need to be protected. Humans have shaped nature, but they have not constructed all of it, and they cannot fully control and understand it (Sessions, 2006: 137). So although explaining what nature is seems difficult, talking about nature is still seen as important by green thinkers because it keeps us from reverting back to the anthropocentric view of the environment, and reminds us that our environments cannot be used and manipulated by humans without limits. So the role that nature plays in green thinking now becomes very puzzling. Nature seems to be both a problematic and an important concept, and many greens do not want to stop talking about nature because they do not want to think of our environments only as resources that can managed and controlled by humans as they wish.

Hybrid Accounts

Introduction to Hybridity

But what if there was some way around these problems, what if we could investigate the different kinds of relationships we share with our environments and recognise the spontaneous flourishing of our environments without talking about nature? What if we could recognise that that which we conventionally call nature has been both materially and discursively constructed by humans, while, at the same time, recognising that real environmental problems exist and we cannot regulate and control nature at will? I shall next investigate how Actor-Network Theory (ANT) offers this kind of approach to looking at

environmental problems. In the framework provided by ANT, natural entities do not exist. But this approach nevertheless avoids the anthropocentric position, it does not think that we can mould our environments at will and it maintains that looking at the relationships we share with our environments is important.

ANT is perhaps named in a misleading manner because it is not a theory but rather, it offers a framework for thinking about relationships between humans and the nonhuman world. ANT challenges the idea that entities can be divided into categories of natural and social, and wants us to start thinking of objects we encounter in the world as belonging to neither of these categories. This is because, according to ANT, entities we conventionally understand as natural and as social exist in complex networks with each other. The starting point for ANT is, as with ecocentrism, looking at our relationships with the environment and at how we exist in interconnected networks with other beings in the world. But ANT takes these explorations further than the ecocentrics do. Whereas ecocentrics argue that investigating these interconnections means that we need to start according intrinsic value to a certain class of entities, ANT claims that there are no stable entities we can accord intrinsic value to. According to ANT, beings are constituted through the relations they share with other beings. Therefore, entities can no longer be seen as having certain qualities in themselves which would allow us to accord intrinsic value to them (Castree and Macmillan, 2001: 211). Donna Haraway (1991) elaborates on this idea through the image of a cyborg that is 'a hybrid of machine and organism' (Haraway, 1991: 149). The image of a cyborg challenges the idea that a distinction can be drawn between 'natural' life and machines. Instead of thinking of the human and the nonhuman as two separate categories, we should think of them as always entangled together, thinking of beings as hybrids of things that we would normally divide into human and nonhuman categories.

So what does it mean to say that entities are constituted through the relations they share with other entities? Whatmore and Thorne (2000; see also Whatmore, 2002) illustrate this by looking at elephants as an example. By investigating an elephant living in a zoo and an elephant living in the wilderness, they explain that there is no one elephant essence that is inserted into these different environments but elephants are only constituted as elephants through the relations they share with their surroundings. Elephants living in zoos are different animals from their wild counterparts. They 'become habituated to a more impoverished repertoire of sociability, movement, and life skills' (Whatmore and Thorne, 2000: 202). Although elephants in zoos might belong taxonomically to African Elephants, they are constituted as elephants through different kinds of relations than wild elephants, they are different elephants and could not survive in the wild (Whatmore and Thorne, 2000: 197). Whatmore and Thorne thus demonstrate how the properties of elephants are shaped through the contexts in which the elephant is situated; there is no stable elephant essence.

Looking at how things are relationally constituted has implications for how we think about nature. Because entities in the world are constituted through the relations they share with other entities, entities do not have any intrinsic qualities which allow them to be classified as natural entities. Instead of dividing entities into the categories of natural and social, ANT understands beings as hybrids that never belong to either one of these spheres. Latour (1993: 2) lists forest fires threatening endangered species as one example of these hybrids that cannot be labelled as natural or as social. The forest fires have come into being through networked relationships with other beings. The forest fires exist as those particular forest fires because of the trees that grow in the forests and because of the animals living in those forests. But they also exist as those particular forest fires because of different processes that caused these fires to break out and because of processes that labelled the species in the forests as endangered and as worthy of protecting (Latour, 1993: 2).

So, according to this point of view, it makes no sense to try to decide whether the apples in my grandparents' garden are natural or social because they are made up of a complex network of things. The apples are those particular apples because they have grown in the soil of that garden, because they have been nourished by the sun and the rain in the garden. The apples are also those apples because they belong to a particular species of apple that has been cultivated by humans, because apple trees were planted in the garden by humans and because the garden is taken care of by humans. The apples only become apples through these different, complicated relationships, and they cannot be labelled as natural or social.

This approach allows for thinking about our environments as something other than a resource, and allows for exploring the different kinds of relationships we can form with our environments. This is because understanding beings as constituted through these networks of humans and nonhumans allows for recognising that humans cannot shape and mould their environments at will. According to ANT, it is not only humans that have a capacity to act in these networks but nonhumans possess this capacity as well. For example, an ANT-oriented study of a river restoration project undertaken by Eden *et al*. (2000) does not see this restoration in dualistic terms where social actors, the humans restoring the river, act to restore a natural entity, the river, back to its rightful, natural state. Instead, it describes the humans restoring the river as only constituting a part of the actors who participated in the restoration project. The restoration process was not a linear process where the plans of the restorers were executed without problems. The river itself had the capacity to act in the restoration process, and did not always easily allow for the execution of plans of the restorers (Eden *et al*. 2000: 266-7). The machinery used for this restoration also had agency, as well as other environmental groups whose support had to be gained in order to make the restoration project possible (Eden *et al.* 2000: 267-8).

Although Latour (2004) suggests that proponents of ANT should start practising environmental politics without making any references to nature, this does not imply thinking of environmental politics in terms of resource management. Our environments are not just resources for us to use as we will but ANT encourages us to treat our environments with caution. If it is not only humans who have agency and a capacity to act when an environmental policy is executed, then we need to be careful when we interact with our environments, and recognise that the way in which we interfere with our environments always carries an element of risk (Whiteside, 2006: 101-7, see also Wolfe 2010: 47). Instead of attempting to protect a nonhuman nature, we should take responsibility for the production of hybrid natures (White and Wilbert, 2009).

In addition to guiding us to treat our environments with caution, an ANT perspective can also guide us towards a different way of approaching environmental ethics, and offers an alternative to the ecocentric accounts of overcoming anthropocentrism by according intrinsic value to natural beings. ANT does this by complicating the question of who environmental ethics is for (Castree, 2003: 10). As Castree (2003: 10, emphasis original) explains:

> If those things that we conventionally call "environmental", "natural" or "non-human" in fact *exceed* those categories […] then the question of who or what ethics is for or about becomes very complicated indeed. *So* complicated, in fact, as to defy mastery by abstract or general ethical principles.

Environmental ethics would now be about investigating the complex networks of things that exist in the world and about deciding which networks can be accorded moral significance. We do not value a set of entities because of qualities that are intrinsic to them, because, for example, we deem these entities to be natural, but these valuations arise through an investigation into the networks they exist in. So denying that there exists a nonhuman nature with intrinsic value does not mean that we should see our environments as lacking moral significance (see also Rudy and White, 2013: 251-2).

Green Accounts of Hybridity

Many green thinkers have taken note of these hybrid accounts of the environment, and are now moving towards investigating the relations between humans and nonhumans from a more ANT-oriented perspective. They are moving away from according intrinsic value to nature towards studying how our environments are populated by hybrids and towards thinking about how we might take responsibility for these hybrid environments (Dobson, 2007: 49-51). The purpose of this section is to explore some of these arguments, to look at how these accounts make sense of the relations between humans and their environments and the kinds of environmental ethics and politics they advocate.

Again, the green literature that does not rely on ecocentric valuations of nature is vast, including, for example, examinations of political theory and self-interest (Hayward, 1995; 1998) and pragmatist approaches to green politics which argue that because, on the practical level, adopting an ecocentric position does not change the way we conduct environmental politics, this ecocentrism/anthropocentrism debate can be side-stepped (e.g. Norton, 1991; O'Neill *et al.*, 2008). I do not have the space to discuss all of these approaches here. Instead, I will concentrate on Val Plumwood's account of hybridity and John Barry's account of ecological virtues because they are both good examples of how the ANT-approach to the environment can be used to make sense of green politics.

Before investigating these green accounts of hybridity, it is worth pausing for a moment to look at how talking about taking care of the environment is different from talking about taking care of nature. I would like to borrow O'Neill *et al.*'s (2008: 1, emphasis original) definition of the environment to explain how this shift signals a change in the way we approach environmental problems:

> There is no such *thing* as the environment. *The* environment – singular – does not exist. In its basic sense to talk of the environment is to talk of environs or surroundings *of* some person, being or community. […]

> In practice talk of the environment is at best a shorthand way of referring to a variety of places, processes and objects that matter […] to particular beings and communities.

So here, I use the environment as a shorthand for those different surroundings we have, and protecting the environment as referring to different ways of taking care of these surroundings. Talking about the environment does not rely on an idea of a homogenous, nonhuman nature, but allows for thinking about the variable relationships we share with our hybrid environments. So how, then, do greens investigate these interconnections between humans and nonhumans, how can we let go of the idea of nature and find different ways of thinking about how to live sustainably in our environments?

Plumwood (2006: 52) elaborates on this question. She explains that showing concern for nature is not at the heart of green thinking, but it is studying these interconnections between humans and nonhumans that makes green thinking a distinct approach to politics. She identifies two implications that arise from focusing on these hybrid accounts of the environment. First, because of the interconnections between humans and nonhumans, it no longer makes sense to see the interests of humans and nonhumans as separate, and to divide environmental ethics into ecocentric and anthropocentric camps. Instead, we now recognise that environmental problems always embody both human and nonhuman concerns, and we are always attempting to make sense of both of these when solving environmental problems (Plumwood, 2007: 59, see also Humphrey, 2002). And second, focusing on accounts of hybridity draws greater attention to the kinds of relationships that humans form with their environments and to the kinds of duties born out of these relationships. Plumwood explains that if we focus on hybridity, 'we must take account of context and acknowledge different cultures in widely differing ecological contexts, nutritional situations and needs' (Plumwood, 2007: 58). Thus, these green hybrid accounts of the environment do not attempt to arrive at any over-arching codes of conduct, but they recognise that these codes of conduct are always context-specific.

Plumwood explores animal rights as an example of what this kind of thinking would mean in practice. Plumwood's account does not advocate becoming vegan in order to protect the intrinsic value of nature but encourages us to recognise that we always use and exploit other animals and our environments; simply ceasing to consume animal products is not going to change this (Plumwood, 2007: 56). Instead of finding over-arching codes of conduct to protect animals, codes for behaviour towards animals are now derived by undertaking a more detailed exploration of our relationship with animals. So instead of advocating veganism to protect the intrinsic value of nature, Plumwood (2007: 57) proposes a semi-vegetarian approach that 'advocates an end to factory farming and great reductions in first-world meat eating, but could still see a place for respectful and mutual forms of use in the food chain.' Deciding when we can consume animal products would require taking into account the context in which these products are consumed, acknowledging the needs of different cultures in which humans are embedded and their different nutritional needs (2007: 57-9). So beings no longer have ethical significance because they are deemed to be natural entities but instead, how we value these entities is decided by looking at the contexts in which we encounter them.

John Barry (1999) approaches environmental ethics in a similar manner. He argues that because the interests of humans and nature are interconnected, it makes no sense to separate the interests of nature from the interests of humans (Barry, 1999: 35). Barry also argues that because nature is not a homogenous entity with which we can live in harmony, we should no longer be aiming to provide a reliable, systematic code of conduct to help us protect nature. Instead, we should recognise that our relationship with nature is always contingent and changing (Barry: 1999: 19). Barry's focus on these complex and changing relationships leads him to argue that we can protect the environment through the development of ecological virtues. Developing ecological virtues can help us protect the environment because they are

'related to socio-environmental relations in which human self-interest and well-being are fulfilled by modes of interaction which minimize harm to […] the nonhuman world as much as possible without sacrificing serious human interests' (Barry, 1999: 35). Because virtue ethics does not concentrate on developing pre-determined ethical norms but looks at the processes through which nature is valued, it recognises that there can be many ways of thinking about relationships between humans and the environment (Barry, 1999: 34). Virtue ethics draws attention to the different relationships that humans have with different parts of nature, to how they relate, for example, in different ways to trees and to viruses and how they consequently treat different parts of nature in different ways (Barry, 1999: 50).

Barry also explains how this focus on developing ecological virtues can influence the way in which we think about the kinds of political structures that help us build sustainable communities. Barry, for example, sees democracy as playing an important part in realising green values. Democracy is important because we cannot know what nature is like. Because of this, a sustainable society that is able to protect nature is open to debate, and requires collective discussions concerning what counts as a sustainable society (Barry, 1996: 116). Barry (1996: 135) argues that democracy has the potential to make processes causing environmental degradation more transparent, it 'makes relations of interdependence more transparent and makes processes and agents of decision making more open, public and (in theory at least) accountable'. Thus, democracy is proposed as a means of promoting green values because we exist in complex networks with nonhumans and because it is difficult to identify what the nonhuman nature that we are supposed to protect is.

Some of the ecocentric approaches to nature also show sensitivity to accounts of hybridity, and could adapt to incorporating hybrid accounts of the environment into their theories. This is the case in particular for the rules-based approach to ecocentrism. Similarities to the hybrid accounts can already be seen in the manner in which the rules-based approach deals with

conflicts of interest. As was explained earlier, there are no strict rules for deciding when to favour the interests of humans over the interests of nonhumans but deciding when to do this is context-dependent. These commonalities with hybrid approaches become more pronounced in Eckersley's account of green politics as she begins to explore the kinds of political structures which can help us protect nature. These were already mentioned briefly earlier in the chapter, but it is now time to discuss them in more detail. Although Eckersley talks about attributing intrinsic value to nature, her accounts of the kind of politics that is able to safeguard the interest of nature is sensitive to many of the arguments made by proponents of hybridity. Eckersley's approach to nature will still remain distinct from those green thinkers who maintain that the interests of humans and nonhumans are so intimately linked that their interests converge and it makes no sense of talk about human and nonhuman interests separately[1]. This is because Eckersley wants to value nonhumans for their own sake. But the manner in which Eckersley explores the kinds of political structures which can help protect the interests of nonhumans is similar to how hybrid approaches discuss these topics. This is evident in particular in her account of democracy.

Eckersley argues that in order to take the interconnections that humans share with nonhumans into account in democratic decision-making, we must move away from our current model of democracy towards a more inclusive form of democracy. Eckersley calls this more inclusive form of democracy ecological democracy. The principle underpinning ecological democracy is that all those who are affected by decisions made by the state should be able to meaningfully participate in decision-making (Eckersley, 2004: 110). This means that democratic processes would extend beyond the territorial boundaries of the nation-state, and would also cross species-boundaries. Ecological democracy must not only include those capable of communication in the decision-making processes but should extend these

[1] See Whiteside (2002: 136-7) for a discussion on how an ANT-oriented approach's stance on this question is

processes to include parts of nature (Eckersley, 2004: 112). This inclusion would be accomplished through select humans representing the interests of nature in decision-making, transforming notions of political trusteeship (Eckersley 2004: 120). Democratic decision-making would aim to be consensual, based on processes of deliberation and negotiation, which would allow participants to understand each other's points of view (Eckersley, 2004: 129-130). In this model of democracy, nonhumans would no longer be treated in instrumental terms but humans would work towards negotiating mutual understandings about the common norms underpinning a sustainable society, inserting empathy and caution into the relationship between humans and nature (Eckersley, 2004: 119). Eckersley's approach to ecological democracy shares many similarities with ANT-oriented approaches to taking care of the environment. How we show concern for nonhumans is not pre-determined but is dependent on processes of deliberation that explore our relationships with the nonhuman world. It would, then, be possible for these deliberations to take place without talking about nature: instead of exploring our relationships with the nonhuman natural world, we could concentrate on exploring our relationships with nonhumans.

So how would this kind of account of hybridity, which acknowledges that the apples in my grandparents' garden are neither natural nor social, guide us towards taking care of these apples? The apples might be seen as worthy of protecting because they are a part of a certain way of living in the Finnish countryside, and upholding this way of living can be important for the quality of life for many. We might also feel that we have a responsibility for these apples and the environment in which they grow, not because these apples are natural, but because we have grown and cultivated them. There are, then, many ways to make green arguments and show concern for apples without talking about nature and without labelling apples as natural. Anthropocentrism can be overcome not only through the ecocentric

approach, but also by investigating the relationships we share with our environments in more detail.

Hybridity and Nature

We can, then, talk about taking care of our environments without appealing to the idea of nature. But does this now mean that nature is not a useful concept for green politics at all? The fact that even green thinkers who reject the ecocentric framework still frequently refer to nonhuman nature and talk about protecting nature suggests that this is not the case. It seems that the concept of nature still remains important for green thinkers and communicates something about green goals. For example, although Barry does not think that nature is a homogenous entity, which can teach us lessons about how we should conduct environmental politics, he nevertheless continues to talk about nature. Instead of proposing that we begin to explore our relationships with our environments, Barry still wants to explore our relationship with a heterogeneous nature.

But why does the idea of nature continue to re-appear in green thinking, why does it seem to be such an important concept and what does it refer to? This concept seems to communicate that there is something more at stake in protecting our environments than can be articulated through the language provided by ANT. Tere Vaden (2010) hints at this by maintaining that there are two reasons for why we need to act to protect the environment. We need to protect it because if environmental degradation continues at the current rate, soon there will not be enough resources left for us to exist on the planet. And we also need to protect it because we do not want to live in a society which treats the environment as a resource. Even if this would allow for perfectly regulating and limiting environmental degradation, it would not be a desirable world to live in (Vaden, 2010: 8). And as Sagoff

illustrates, protecting nature is not just about fighting environmental degradation but it is also about taking care of the places in which we live: '[m]uch of what we deplore about the human subversion of nature – and fear about the destruction of the environment – has to do with the loss of places we keep in shared memory and cherish with instinctive and collective loyalty' (Sagoff, 1996: 249). So it seems, then, that there is something important about the concept of nature, that protecting nature goes beyond preventing environmental degradation and beyond extending the moral community to include nonhumans. These kinds of feelings are expressed well by Mick Smith who writes that:

> Like many interested in developing environmental ethics I want to argue that the natural world does *mean* something to me. Springs do in some sense "speak" to me, they affect me, move me, altering my understanding of my relations to my surrounding environment (Smith, 2005: 222, emphasis original).

Nature is not just something we can ignore and replace with ANT-inspired reflections on environmental degradation or alternative environmental ethics.

Returning to the example of the apple trees in my grandparents' garden once more, what is missing from the hybrid account of apples, what is left out of the account of the apples if we do not talk about nature? The hybrid approach can overcome thinking about these apples merely as resources, and is able to explore how they can play a part in my life in a multitude of ways. But unlike the ecocentric approaches, particularly deep ecology's accounts of nature, which were able to communicate something about the sense of wonder in encountering the apples, the hybrid approaches are unable to do so. Talking about nature enabled me to communicate something about the experience of encountering these apples that is difficult to put into words, but that can nevertheless motivate and inspire me to protect them. So, it seems that there is something lacking in the way I think about the apples if I do not refer to the idea of nature.

But this still does not answer the question of what this thing called 'nature' is, and how we might talk about it without encountering the problems discussed in this chapter. Because this

experience of nature seems to be so difficult to articulate, I do not think that we should be looking for any way of strictly defining and explaining what nature is. Part of what makes this concept seem so important is that it is mysterious, that we cannot fully explain or understand what it is. Curry (2006), for example, explains that the ambiguity of the concept of nature is the reason it still plays an important role in green politics. Thinking about how to best protect nature, that we cannot fully make sense of, reminds us how the value of our environments 'cannot be fully explained, analysed or justified in terms of other concepts or values' (Curry, 2006: 104). So instead of defining what nature is and explaining what counts as nature, I would like to, in this thesis, find tools for starting to think about nature, for understanding where we should look to experience nature and how we could go about protecting it.

To start thinking about this experience of nature, I will, in the next chapter, turn to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger is a philosopher who shares many similarities with green thinkers. He urges us to let beings be, to allow them to unfold in their own distinct ways, to not dominate beings but to care for them as the beings that they are (Zimmerman, 1992: 249-50). As was already explored in the introduction, the reason why Heidegger's philosophy might be particularly useful in making sense of the concept of nature in green politics can be seen in how he thought about language. Heidegger did not think that language is an instrument for us, he did not think that when we use words, we know the meaning these words have for us. For Heidegger, when we use a particular word, we can never fully explain or understand why it was appropriate to use that word in a particular context. Thus, he claimed that language speaks to us. So maybe it is the case that even if we cannot say what the word 'nature' means, this word is speaking to us in green politics. We can, then, use Heidegger's philosophy to begin to listen to this word, and to start thinking about what it really is that this word is communicating to us.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the role that the concept of nature plays in green thought. It began by exploring ecocentric arguments seeking an alternative to anthropocentric attitudes towards the environment. Ecocentrics attempt to overcome anthropocentrism by maintaining that nature has intrinsic value and is worthy of protection for its own sake. The chapter then went on to challenge the idea that there exists some nonhuman nature that we can accord intrinsic value to. Nature, according to critics, is not nonhuman, but it has been both discursively and materially produced by humans. Ecocentric approaches to green politics are unable to grapple with these criticisms of the idea of nature. As a result, many greens have started looking at the relationships we share with our environments through the idea of hybridity. These hybrid accounts are able to explain how we can show care for our environments without referring to the idea of nature. But the chapter concluded by looking at how, although these hybrid accounts are able to overcome the problems involved in talking about nature, they were unable to convey the sense of wonder present in our experiences of our environments. It seems, then, that we lose something important when we let go of the idea of nature. It is the purpose of the chapters that follow to explore what it means to protect nature if it does not mean taking care of a nonhuman environment, and how we can talk about protecting nature without encountering the problems that were discussed in this chapter. The next chapter will begin this task by starting to explore the philosophy of Martin Heidegger.

Chapter Two: Heidegger and Green Politics: An Initial Interpretation

Introduction

The previous chapter began exploring the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics and concluded that this role is a puzzle. Green thinkers separate themselves from environmentalists, who aim merely to manage natural resources efficiently to satisfy the needs of humans, by concentrating on investigating the relationships we share with our environments, often according intrinsic value to nature. However, greens are unable to fully respond to the challenges posed by those who maintain that we cannot draw clear distinctions between human and nonhuman environments: they are unable to explain what exactly these natural beings which they want to protect are, and how they can be distinguished from things that are not part of nature. Abandoning the concept of nature does not solve these problems because, even if green thinkers are unable to explain what nature is, protecting nature still remains an important part of green politics. Talking about nature communicates something important about the richness of the environment and about the importance of protecting it, which cannot be expressed through the language of environmental politics.

To start making sense of what it means to protect nature, this chapter turns to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's philosophy, that concentrates on asking the question of Being, also discusses the unfolding of nature and the sky and the earth, and explores how we might start to dwell on the earth. As such, it contains many environmental themes. The way in which Heidegger questions Being can help us think about what nature is because it suggests that maybe we do not have to clearly define nature to be able to protect it. Instead, thinking of nature as something that cannot be fully defined nor understood can bring about new ways of thinking about nature and green politics. In this chapter, I will present my

initial interpretation of Heidegger's thought and my initial understanding of how he can help us understand the role of nature in green politics. There are two reasons why I am presenting only an initial interpretation. First, although the interpretation presented here leaves some themes underdeveloped, it serves as a good introduction to Heidegger's thought and allows us to start thinking about the concept of nature. Second, this kind of reading of Heidegger is also adopted by many green thinkers themselves and looking at how he has been used in green thought aids us in thinking about the concept of nature in green politics. But, as will be demonstrated at the end of this chapter, investigating these green accounts in detail also reveals problems in this interpretation of Heidegger and highlights a need to move to a different way of thinking about his philosophy and about the role of nature in his thought.

This chapter is divided into six parts. I first introduce Heidegger's philosophy and look at what it means to question Being. The section that follows then begins to explore Heidegger's thought by looking at how he asks the question of Being in *Being and Time*. The third section looks at how Heidegger questioned the truth of Being in his middle work, and how he thought that this truth is revealed to us differently in different historical periods. The fourth section explores Heidegger's later work and looks at how technological thinking dominates the revealing of Being in the current age, and the fifth section explores how we can overcome technological thinking by learning to dwell in the fourfold of the earth, the sky, the gods and the mortals. And finally, in the sixth section, I will look at how Heidegger's thinking has been adopted by green thinkers and explore the problems that these green interpretations run into, suggesting that a new way of thinking about the nature in Heidegger's works is required.

Heidegger's Question of Being

The central focus of Heidegger's work is to question Being. The question of Being is the question of 'that which determines entities as entities, that on the basis of which entities are already understood' (BT: 25-26; SZ: 8). It is a question of how the presence of beings occurs, why it is that we can encounter beings as beings at all (Sheehan, 2011: 19). Beings, for Heidegger, refer to material entities and to immaterial things and concepts that we use to make sense of the world. Perhaps the best way into understanding the kind of questioning that Heidegger is undertaking is to look at how, according to Heidegger, philosophy has forgotten to ask the question of Being. Pre-Socratics were not yet overtaken by the forgetfulness of Being, they were struck by the wonder that beings are without explaining their presence by referring to other beings. However, philosophy has, since pre-Socratic thinkers, been pre-occupied with categorising beings, and when it has asked about Being, it has reduced Being to another kind of being. It thus has not asked the question of Being in the way that Heidegger wishes to ask it.

This started with Plato, for whom the eternal forms, certain kinds of beings themselves, make beings accessible to us and allow beings to appear as beings. For Plato, beings always correspond to their eternal and unchanging form that gives them their essence. In Christian theology, Being is understood as another kind of being because beings are understood as something created by the eternal God. God, then, becomes the being that is the cause of all other beings. Finally, Descartes, in order to explain what allows a being to appear, argues that beings have objective qualities, such as colour and weight, and qualities that are determined by subjective interpretation. These objective qualities allow beings to be as they are, and it is the task of the human subject to separate objective qualities of beings from their subjective qualities. All of these accounts explain why beings can appear to us as beings by focusing on another kind of being: Plato does this by focusing on the eternal forms, Christian theology by

arguing that beings are created by God and Descartes by maintaining that beings have objective qualities that can be known by the human subject. Philosophy has thus forgotten to ask the question of Being.

Questioning Being is therefore an attempt to move away from asking questions about the properties of beings. It entails asking what it means to claim that beings *are* in the first place, what grounds their presence, without reducing Being to another kind of being. I have chosen to capitalise the word 'Being' here although this choice is somewhat controversial. This word is capitalised in the original German because in German all nouns are capitalised. Many (e.g. Dreyfus, 1991: 11; Zimmerman, 1990: xxii) have, however, argued that this word should not be capitalised in English, explaining that it is misleading because a capital *B* suggests that Heidegger's Being is a being itself. My purpose in capitalising Being, however, is to distinguish it from 'being', used as a verb, and not to imply that Being is another kind of being (see e.g. Capobianco, 2010: 7-9; Young, 2002: 13).

But how can we go about questioning Being? In *What is Called Thinking* Heidegger elaborates on this in the following passage:

> There is a tree in the yard. We state: the tree is well-shaped. It is an apple tree. This year it did not bear many apples. The birds like it. The apple-grower still has other things to say about it. The scientific botanist who conceives of the tree as a plant, can point out a variety of things about the tree. And finally there comes along a strange and curious human being and says: the tree is, it is not so that the tree is not (WCT: 173; WHD: 106).

This is the question of Being that Heidegger is asking: 'what about this "is," according to which it is not so that the tree is not', why is the apple tree, or any other kind of being, present to us as a being (WCT: 173; WHD: 107). So how does Heidegger inquire about the 'is'? It is important to note that the question of Being is not a question of finding some essence that is in all beings that allows them to appear as beings and exists independently of the attributes of beings. This kind of questioning would approach Being as another kind of

being, and is the kind of questioning of Being that has taken place throughout the history of philosophy and that Heidegger is critical of. At this point, the final phrase of the passage, Heidegger's addition of 'it is not so that the tree is not' may sound peculiar, but I will return to exploring the significance of this 'not' later on in the thesis. For now, this phrase can be thought of as an attempt to further awaken us to question the fact that beings are.

This passage demonstrates how questioning Being cannot, in the end, be understood as something that is completely separate from questioning beings: Heidegger is asking about what makes possible the is, but, at the same time, he maintains that, because Being itself is not something, we can only think about Being through our encounters with beings that are something. Heidegger thus explains that what is asked is not about 'what is present as such and not Being as such, nor both added together in a synthesis, but: their duality, emerging from their unity kept hidden' (WCT: 242; WHD: 148). The question of Being is a question of how beings appear to us *as* beings. Asking this question requires us to stay with beings and to question them. What it means to stay with beings will become clearer as the argument of the thesis progresses.

Because Being itself is not another kind of being, we cannot think about Being in a manner in which we normally think about beings. Being is not a thing that we can define, or explain: 'we cannot apply to Being the concept of "definition" as presented in traditional logic' (BT: 23, SZ: 5-6). Being must be questioned in such a way that it is not reduced to another kind of being, understood as something that itself is not a being:

> In relating to it, whether theoretically or practically, we are comporting ourselves toward a being. Beyond all these beings *there is nothing.* Perhaps there *is* no other being beyond what has been enumerated, but perhaps, as in the German idiom for 'there is' *es gibt* [literally,'it gives'], still something else *is given*. Even more. In the end something is given which *must* be given if we are to be able to make beings accessible to us as beings and comport ourselves toward them, something which, to be sure, is not but which must be given if we are to experience and understand any beings at all (BPP: 10, GP: 13-14, emphasis original).

But this does not mean that we cannot inquire about Being. Instead, it means that we need a different way of asking about Being. In order to avoid thinking about Being as another kind of being, we must learn to question Being or to think about Being. Particularly in Heidegger's later writings, thinking about Being takes a form that is different from how philosophical works are conventionally understood. Heidegger talks about the differences between how he wants to approach thinking, in terms of thinking about Being, and thinking, as it is understood traditionally, when we grapple with scientific problems or everyday practical matters as follows:

1. Thinking does not bring knowledge as do the sciences.
2. Thinking does not produce usable practical wisdom.
3. Thinking does not solve cosmic riddles.
4. Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act.

(WCT: 159; WHD: 161).

Thinking about Being is different because it does not attempt to form statements about beings. So what does this way of thinking about Being, then, entail? Ben-Dor (2007: 44) explains that thinking about Being should not be understood as an attempt to define Being, as an attempt to understand Being so that we can bring it under our control. Thinking should, instead, be understood as being indebted to Being, it 'is a process that makes its focused concern the contemplation of, responding to, Being' (Ben-Dor, 2007: 44). Being calls us to think so that 'it can be tended, cared for, husbanded in its own essential nature, by thought' (WCT: 121; WHD: 85).

Heidegger's works, then, instead of being traditional works of philosophy, offer pathways into thinking, or questioning, Being. As I begin to explore his works, I will examine in more detail how Heidegger thought about Being throughout his works and why this kind of thinking is important. It will also become clearer how thinking about Being can help us rethink the meaning of nature and the role it plays in green politics. At no point will we find

in Heidegger's work a clear definition of what thinking about Being entails. This is because thinking about Being requires us to take a leap into a different way of thinking. Heidegger is unable to explain how we are to take this leap and thus, his writings should not be thought of as instructions for taking this leap. Instead, they should be thought of as ways that help us prepare for this leap (WCT: 12; WHD: 48). In what follows, I will start to make sense of what it means to question Being in this manner by looking at how Heidegger inquires after Being in his early work, in particular in *Being and Time.*

Being and Time

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger begins answering the question of Being by looking at how humans exist in the world in a way that they can encounter beings as beings. Heidegger's inquiry into Being centres around how humans make sense of things because, he argues, humans are those beings for whom Being is an issue, those beings who can ask what it means for beings to be. In *Being and Time,* by understanding how humans make sense of things, Heidegger hopes to grasp Being itself. Initially, *Being and Time* was to consist in two parts, both with three divisions. However, in the end, Heidegger only finished the first and second divisions of Part One. As I will explore further at the end of this chapter, Heidegger felt that the language and framework of *Being and Time* was inadequate for completing his project.

The purpose of Division One of *Being and Time* is to present a preparatory analysis, which looks at the everyday engagements that humans have with the world, and on which Heidegger can build the analysis he presents in the division that follows. Here Heidegger calls humans Dasein. The German word 'Da' can be translated as 'there' or 'here', and when 'Dasein' is translated into English, it is often translated as 'being-there' (see e.g Malpas, 2007: 50). This translation highlights how calling humans Dasein is a way of talking about

humans in a way which does not refer to them as conscious subjects that encounter the world in terms of distinct objects. Instead, it communicates that humans always exist *in* the world, and the way in which they make sense of the world can only be understood by looking at how they are involved with the world. However, it is also important to note that this translation of Dasein as being-there misses other connotations of the German word 'Da': 'Da' does not only mean 'there', but it can also mean 'here'. To be Dasein means to be that which first makes the there and the here possible (see Ingwood, 1999: 42). Because of these difficulties in translation, I have left the term Dasein untranslated in what follows.

Heidegger's focus on Dasein, on the idea that humans always exist in the world and are always involved with the world, is at the heart of his questioning of Being. He also introduces the term being-in-the-world (In-der-Welt-Sein) to describe Dasein's way of always being involved with the world. For example, Heidegger explains that noise can only be understood as noise if it is encountered in a particular context: '[w]hat we "first" hear is never noises or complexes of sounds, but the creaking waggon, the motorcycle. We hear the column on the march, the north wind, the woodpecker tapping, the fire crackling' (BT: 207; SZ: 217). Noise, then, can only appear as noise to Dasein through its involvements with the world.

Heidegger calls the sphere, which allows beings to appear as beings, a clearing. The clearing is an opening that allows beings to emerge as beings with which humans can engage. This clearing, Heidegger maintains, is Dasein itself because it is only through Dasein's interpretative activity and practical engagements that the clearing can emerge and beings can appear as beings: 'Only for an entity which is existentially cleared [lichtet] in this way does that which is present-at-hand become accessible in the light or hidden in the dark (BT: 171; SZ: 177). The German word that Heidegger uses for clearing is 'Lichtung'. The literal meaning of 'Lichtung' is forest clearing, and the word 'Lichtung' also has a relation to light.

The use of 'Lichtung', then, evokes an image of a thick, dark forest with an opening where beings can be lit and can become visible, where beings can appear as beings.

This means that beings do not appear as beings outside of this clearing, there are no beings that exist as beings prior to the appearance of the clearing. And it also means that beings do not appear as beings in Dasein's mind, outside of Dasein's involvements and encounters with the world. Beings only appear to us as beings when they are lighted up in the clearing that is Dasein. Another way of thinking about Heidegger's questioning of Being, then, is to think about it in terms of the clearing, as a questioning of this opening that allows beings to appear to us as beings.

The apples in my grandparents' garden, for example, can only appear to me as apples in the clearing that lights these apples as beings. And when these apples do appear to me, they appear as those particular apples, growing in that particular garden. Although, as I will explore later on in this chapter, the focus of Heidegger's work changes, Dasein continues to occupy a special role in his thinking throughout his works. In Heidegger's later works, Dasein still continues to be the clearing, the opening in which beings can appear. Without Dasein, matter would still exist but there would not be the clearing that allowed for the appearance of beings.

Heidegger explores the everyday involvements that humans share with the world by looking at how humans engage with a piece of equipment. Ordinarily, we encounter equipment as what Heidegger calls ready-to-hand. When we begin working with a piece of familiar equipment, we do not explicitly think what the equipment is and how we should use it, we already know how to use it. Our interpretation of the equipment 'is grounded in *something we have in advance'* (BT: 191; SZ: 200 emphasis original). Instead of concentrating on the piece of equipment, we concentrate on working with it. We do not have

to think about the equipment we are using but instead, we concentrate on our work: 'That with which our everyday dealings proximally dwell is not the tools themselves. On the contrary, that with which we concern ourselves primarily is the work' (BT: 99; SZ: 94). When we start slicing apples in order to bake them into a pie, for example, we do not think of each apple as an apple and the knife we use to slice them as a knife. We know how to slice apples without paying explicit attention to the knife and to the apples. The knife and the apple disappear from us as we become immersed in making the pie.

Only when the equipment no longer works the way we want it to, when it breaks for example, do we start to pay attention to it. We now encounter this equipment as what Heidegger calls present-at-hand. But, even then, we do not encounter the equipment as some kind of a pure object. The equipment only shows up as present-at-hand in a particular context, and holds a particular meaning to us because it no longer fulfils its purpose. For example, if we encounter a rotten apple when we are slicing apples and stop to inspect this apple, the apple becomes present-at-hand for us. But we do not encounter the apple independent of the involvements we share with the world. The apple only appears to us as rotten, as something spoiled, because we wanted to use the apple for cooking.

Heidegger also provides a discussion of how we not only exist in the world amidst other beings but also amidst other Dasein. As beings appear to us as beings, they are revealed to us in the context of the relations they have to other Dasein: 'the field shows itself as belonging to such-and-such a person, and decently kept by him; the book we have used was bought at So-and-so's shop and given by such-and-such a person, and so forth.' (BT: 153-4; SZ: 157). Being-in-the-world is, then, always also a being-with (Mitsein) (Schatzki, 2005: 234). Kockelmans (1965: 65) describes this being-with as sharing a world, taking two people examining a painting as an example: 'When two people admire a painting and are similarly

affected by it, this harmony of feelings brings them closer together, it develops a bond between them which could become the root of a community.'

Thinking about being-with brings Heidegger to a discussion of *das Man*. This discussion describes how other people influence the way in which we act in the world we live in. It is, however, difficult to find a translation for *das Man*. Many translations have been suggested such as the 'They' (e.g. Kocklemans, 1965: 61; Mulhall, 1996: 106-108), 'Anyone' (e.g. Guignon, 1983) or 'Others' (e.g. O'Brien, 2011). Maybe the best way of translating it is 'the one'. This choice is able to communicate how the German 'das Man' has been derived from the German word 'man' that is the singular impersonal pronoun (e.g. Carman, 2003; Dreyfus, 1991: 143; Gomer, 2007: 107; Schatzki, 2005). This is indeed what Heidegger is trying to get at, he describes *das Man* as that 'which is nothing definitive, and which all are, though not as the sum' (BT: 164; SZ: 169). Referring to *das Man* as the one, unlike translating it as 'they' or 'others' also emphasises how *das Man* is not something distinct from ourselves but we are always included in *das Man* as well (Carman, 2003: 138 n. 67).

Heidegger maintains that when we are absorbed in the one, we exist in the world in an inauthentic manner. The German words for authentic and inauthentic, 'eigentlich' and 'uneigentlich' have the root 'eigen' which translates as the adjective 'own'. Authenticity and inauthenticity, then, are linked to the idea of owness. An inauthentic existence signifies a way of being-in-the-world where Dasein is not his/her own self. Dasein exists in an inauthentic way when it is absorbed in the one, when it chooses actions or ways of life according to the one, and does not make these choices for him/herself (O'Brien, 2011: 25).

So how do our engagements with the one lead us to act inauthentically? Heidegger illustrates how we come to be absorbed into the one as follows:

> In utilizing public means of transport and in making use of information services such as the newspaper, every other is like the next. This Being-with-one-another dissolves one's own Dasein completely into the

> kind of Being of 'the Others', in such a way, indeed, that the others, indistinguishable and explicit, vanish more and more. In this ifnconspicuousness and unascertainability, the real dictatorship of the one is unfolded. We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *one* takes pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature as one sees and judges; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as one shrinks back; we find shocking what one finds shocking (BT: 164; SZ:169, translation modified).

So for example, inspired by a public mood that encourages eating organic locally grown food, we could start purchasing organically grown apples straight from the producer every autumn, not really reflecting on these actions in more depth but performing them because this is what everyone does, because it is fashionable. We might think that we are acting authentically, being rooted in traditions because this is what the public opinion tells us is the case. However, this behaviour would be, in fact, an example of an inauthentic existence.

Heidegger calls engaging with everyday matters, existing inauthentically, fallenness into the world. When Dasein is absorbed in the world and engages with beings, Dasein falls away from questioning Being. Dasein gets lost in its everyday concern, engaging with beings, following cultural norms without reflecting on them further. Heidegger explains how fallenness is characterised by idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity. Idle talk refers to thoughtlessly chatting about things without paying further attention to their significance, without reflecting on them authentically: 'what is said in the talk gets understood; but what the talk is about is understood only approximately and superficially' (BT: 212; SZ: 223, translation modified). Curiosity describes Dasein searching for novel experiences and sources for entertainment, engaging with the look of things without thinking about them. Curiosity 'discloses everything and anything, yet in such a way that Being-in is everywhere and nowhere' (BT: 221; SZ: 235). Ambiguity refers to the loss of our ability to distinguish between meaningless chatter and a more meaningful way of examining things. Through being absorbed in the one, through following the public opinion, Dasein thinks that there is no need for any more authentic grasp of the world: '[T]he supposition of the one that one is leading

and sustaining a full and genuine "life", brings Dasein a *tranquillity* for which everything is "in the best of order' (BT: 222; SZ: 235-6, translation modified, emphasis original).

It is, however, important to note that Heidegger's description of an inauthentic mode of existence is not a criticism of existing with others. He is not encouraging us to find some essence of ourselves that exists independently of our engagements with others. We cannot completely avoid inauthenticity, we always share the world with others, we share common practices, and these allow us to go about our everyday activities. As Keller and Weberman (1998: 374-5, emphasis original) demonstrate, Dasein's way of being-in-the-world is '*always* shaped by the everyday social ways of *das Man*.' Heidegger's description of the one, then, should not be understood as describing an existence independent of other Dasein but should be understood as a criticism of mass-culture, of loss of individuality and the rule of the public opinion (O'Brien, 2011: 25). Towards the end of the thesis, I will return to this idea of being-with, and explore how it can help us make sense of how we can live in such a way that we pay attention to Being.

To complete the discussion on Dasein's everyday modes of existence, Heidegger discusses the concept of anxiety. This discussion is important because, for Heidegger, anxiety has the potential to reveal how Dasein has fallen into the world. Unlike fear, that is always fear of something, anxiety is not directed at anything in particular. When Dasein is anxious, Dasein does not feel at home in the world. The world slips away from Dasein, and beings no longer appear as beings that can be engaged with:

> Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious. Here the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand discovered within-the-world is, as such, of no consequences; it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking in significance (BT: 231; SZ: 247).

But anxiety has the potential to lead us away from an inauthentic existence. If we are prepared not to flee from anxiety by busying ourselves with beings, we can grasp something important about how we are in the world. Beings slipping away from us in anxiety can reveal how the appearance of our world is contingent on us engaging with the world and with beings: 'What oppresses us is not this or that, nor is it the summation of everything present-at-hand; it is rather the *possibility* of the ready-to-hand in general; that is to say, it is the world itself' (BT; 231; SZ; 248, emphasis original). It demonstrates that the existence of the world is not grounded in anything external, such as God or Plato's ideas, but it is dependent on our continued engagement with the world.

Heidegger concludes Division One of *Being and Time* by talking about the care-structure of Dasein. The way in which Dasein fundamentally is in the world is care. There are three aspects that describe this care-structure. The first two are Being-ahead-of-itself and thrownness. Being-ahead-of itself means we are always oriented towards the future, we do things for-the-sake-of other things. But this being-ahead-of-itself does not happen in a void. It always happens in the context of Dasein's thrownness into a world. Our actions happen in the context of the world into which we are thrown, and this limits our choices and possibilities. The world into which we are thrown opens up possibilities for acting in a certain way and, in the end, we are the ones who have to project ourselves to this world, we ourselves are free to make certain choices about our lives, to act in the world in a certain way. And the third aspect is our fallenness into the world discussed above: Dasein is always falling into the world, engaging with beings and absorbed by beings. Dasein being ahead of itself and being thrown into the world always takes place in the context of the beings that Dasein is engaged with (BT: 235-238; SZ: 257-258). This care-structure, then, describes how Dasein is in the world:

> The point is not that Dasein is always caring and concerned, or that failures of sympathy are impossible or are to be discouraged, it is rather that as being-in-the-world, Dasein *must* deal with that world. The world and everything in it is something that cannot fail to matter to us (Mulhall, 1996: 111, emphasis original).

This care-structure can, for example, be observed in the way of being-in-the-world of someone who is thrown into a world where people grow apples for a living, who chooses to start growing apples, and who consequently becomes engaged with and concerned for apples and apple trees, who falls into the world of the apples.

We could stop here and maintain we are now ready to answer Heidegger's question of Being by looking at how Heidegger describes Dasein's everyday engagements with the world. This is done, for example, by Hubert Dreyfus (1992). Dreyfus argues that, based on Heidegger's understanding of Dasein's everyday practices and the one, Being can now be understood as referring to our shared background practices that allow beings to appear to us as beings, that allow us to make sense of the things we encounter in the world. This way of thinking about Being has, however, been criticised by others. Keller and Weberman (1998: 376) explain how Dreyfus' interpretation of Being might be able to make sense of Dasein's everyday ways of being-in-the-world but it ignores the fact that Heidegger's analysis of Dasein's existence in *Being and Time* goes beyond these everyday practices when Heidegger begins to search for more authentic ways of being-in-the-world in Division Two. As Heidegger himself emphasised, the analysis taken in Division One is merely preparatory. It discusses Dasein's inauthentic, everyday existence, but does not yet explore what unifies these different everyday ways of being-in-the-world and what grounds Dasein's everyday existence (Gelven, 1970: 112). The question that Heidegger is asking, then, cannot be answered by talking about everyday practices. Instead, we must ask what grounds these practices, 'what makes possible this sharable making sense of the world in the first place' (Keller and Weberman, 1998: 378). I will return to Dreyfus' interpretation of Heidegger and to these criticisms of his interpretation later on in the thesis. But now, I shall move on to examine how Heidegger continues to question Being in Division Two of *Being and Time*.

In Division Two of *Being and Time*, Heidegger moves away from examining Dasein's everyday engagements with the world and begins to look at how Dasein could be in the world in an authentic manner. To start exploring this, he introduces the notion of being-towards-death. Dasein can be towards death because it can anticipate its death, the possibility of its not being-in-the-world. When Dasein exists inauthentically in the world, Dasein flees death. Heidegger describes this fleeing as follows:

> 'Death' is encountered as a well-known event occurring within-the-world. As such, it remains in the inconspicuousness characteristic of what is encountered in an everyday fashion. The one has already stowed away an interpretation for this event. It talks of it in a 'fugitive' manner, either expressly or else in a way which is mostly inhibited, as if to say 'One of these days one will die too, in the end; but right now it has nothing to do with us' (BT: 297; SZ: 336, translation modified).

When Dasein exists inauthentically, it is not unaware of its own mortality, but rather, thinks of death as something that is '*not yet present-at-hand* for oneself, and is therefore no threat' (BT: 297; SZ: 336, emphasis original). Being-towards-death authentically is different. This way of being entails accepting and paying attention to the fact that Dasein's existence is finite. Heidegger thus explains that when existing authentically, Dasein 'becomes free from the entertaining of "incidentals" with – which busy curiosity keeps providing itself – primarily from the events of the world' (BT: 358; SZ: 411).

Existing authentically also changes the way we are in the world with others. Authentic existence should be thought of as '*pointing toward the possibility of* an authentic social existence which is to be preferred, one assumes, to one in which *everyone is the other and no one is himself* where others *simply are what they do* as mere automatons within the network of equipmentality' (O'Brien, 2011: 58, emphasis original, cf. Carman, 2005). People are no longer encountered as just parts of the one but they are encountered in a more authentic manner, they are not encountered as equipment but as other Dasein who also exist in the

world and make sense of the world in their own ways (Dahlstrom, 2001a: 274). Scott describes this as follows:

> Rather than living as though they were fulfilling the manifest destiny of some pre-established goals for all mankind, people foresee the world in terms of incomplete possibility. They care for people and things with the anticipation that lives will continue to be incomplete, marked by possibility and always in need of care […]. Heidegger intends a way of living in which the ontological meaning of Dasein is apparent in an individual's life such that the incomplete and never fully grasped potentiality of being in the ways people live (Scott: 2009: 63).

When we exist authentically, we do not treat others as means to accomplish our own goals or ideals because we recognise that our goals and ideals are ultimately groundless, we are able to consider these aims and goals with a certain degree of distance and not impose them on others. Thus, an authentic existence that accepts our finite grasp of the world treats things and other Dasein in less instrumental ways.

Heidegger explains at the end Division Two that this analysis of death and authentic existence reveals that the care-structure is grounded in Dasein's temporality. The care-structure has a unity, Dasein's temporality. All elements of the care-structure can be thought of in terms of temporarily: thrownness refers to past, being-ahead-of-itself to the future and fallenness to the present (BT: 300-2; SZ; 432-3) So what Heidegger has demonstrated here is that that which allows beings to appear as beings is not some stable ground but the way in which beings appear as beings is grounded in Dasein's temporality, in the present, the past and the future (de Boer, 2005: 35). We are thrown into the world as finite beings, there is nothing stable that grounds our understanding of beings but it is our finite existence that allows beings to appear to us: 'our finitude makes all "as"-taking and "is"-saying possible by requiring us to understand things not immediately […], but indirectly' (Sheehan, 2001: 199).

However, Heidegger's exploration into the meaning of Being is incomplete in *Being and Time*. The analytical language he employed to make sense of the way in which Dasein is in the world was not, in the end, enough to describe how beings appear to us as beings, how we

are thrown into the world and can encounter beings as beings. As Heidegger himself explains in 'Letter on Humanism', the later parts of *Being and Time*, which were supposed to move away from the analysis of Dasein and explore the unfolding of Being, were never written because he was unable to complete the project with the kind of questioning he adopted in *Being and Time* (LH: 250; BT: 158, see also Kisiel, 2005: 190-3). To continue questioning Being, Heidegger, in his later works, needed to adopt a different kind of language. It is to this different way of questioning that I will turn to next.

Truth and History

After *Being and Time,* Heidegger started to gradually move away from looking at how Dasein makes sense of the world. Heidegger began to focus on how the truth of Being unfolds and how this unfolding is always historical. The language that Heidegger uses to make sense of Being also begins to change and he moves away from the more analytical language that is traditionally associated with philosophical works. To start exploring this shift in his writings, I will first look at how Heidegger goes on to rethink the notion of truth and then move on to examine how he talks about the unfolding of this truth.

So why would Heidegger think about truth in great detail, why is this question of truth something we should concern ourselves with? Heidegger wants to arrive at a new way of approaching truth because he is of the opinion that our current ways of thinking about truth do not allow for questioning Being. To be able to question Being, Heidegger wants us to move away from thinking of truth as correctness towards thinking about truth as the unconcealment, or the revealing, of entities. In an essay called 'The Essence of Truth', he explains that when we normally talk about truth, we are talking about truth as correctness of propositions, as correspondence with a given set of facts. Heidegger elaborates on this by

looking at how we talk about gold. We talk about true gold, genuine gold, and distinguish it from false gold. It is important for us to make this distinction because false gold only resembles gold and it is therefore not real gold. But although the false gold is not real, true gold, it is nevertheless an actual thing. So we cannot distinguish true gold from false gold on the basis of actuality because genuine and false gold are both actual things. Heidegger explains that we understand genuine gold as true gold because it corresponds to what we mean when we talk about gold. Similarly, false gold is understood as being false because it does not correspond to the idea that we have of gold (ET: 137-8; WW: 74-5). Genuine gold is understood as true gold not because it is more actual than false gold, but because it corresponds to the idea we have of gold.

But, Heidegger explains, understanding truth as correctness is unable to grasp what is involved in thinking about the truth of beings, and is unable to question Being. This is because to assess whether a given being corresponds to a set of facts, we must first have formed an idea of what that being is, the being must have unconcealed itself to us as something. He illustrates:

> The entire *realm* in which this 'conforming to something' goes on must already occur as a whole in the unconcealed; and this holds equally of that *for* which the conformity of a proposition to fact becomes manifest. With all our correct representations we would get nowhere, we could not even presuppose that there already is manifest something to which we can conform ourselves, unless the unconcealedness of beings had already exposed us to, placed us in that lighted realm in which every being stands for us and from which it withdraws (OWA: 51; UK: 39 emphasis original).

A piece of gold, for example, only shows itself as genuine gold because humans have a particular understanding of what genuine gold is. Correct statements, then, do not question Being, nor are they universally valid statements of beings. Instead, they only make sense when a being appears as a being in a particular clearing. To ask about the truth of beings and about their Being requires thinking about how beings are revealed to us as beings in the first place. To think about the truth of gold, then, is not to assess whether something corresponds

to the idea we have of gold, but it is about thinking about how something appears to us as gold in the first place.

Heidegger's criticism of understanding truth as correctness can be elaborated by again looking at apples as an example. Different people encounter different kinds of apples in my grandparents' garden. As I walk in the garden in a leisurely fashion, I encounter the apples in the garden as something that contribute to the nature of the walk, as something that make up the peaceful atmosphere of the garden. But my grandfather, who takes care of the garden, encounters these apples as something that should be nurtured and looked after. There is, then, no one correct way of describing the apples, forming correct statements about them does not explain what they are.

One can, of course, object to this by saying that there are certain universally valid, correct observations that we can make of apples. We can, for example, split an apple in half and describe what it looks like inside. We can also weigh the apple and report its weight. But Heidegger would argue that, although we can form these correct statements of the apple, these statements are unable to describe why the apple showed up as something to be weighed and measured in the first place, what the apple really is. And indeed, Heidegger would maintain that, as we focus on producing correct statements of the apple, the truth of the apple, the appleness of the apple, slips away from us (see OWA: 46; UK: 33). It is only when we are not so willing to form correct statements about beings, when we adopt a more questioning attitude, paying attention to how the apple reveals itself to us, that we can grasp the truth of the apple.

Heidegger goes on provide a detailed account of the happening of truth an essay, 'Origins of the Work of Art'. In this essay, he discusses how truth is unconcealed in the work of art, how concealment always plays a role in the happening of truth and how the work of art can

set up different historical worlds. In 'Origins of the Work of Art', Heidegger describes the interplay between concealment and unconcealment as a strife between the earth and the world, and discusses how this strife can manifest itself in the work of art. To make sense of Heidegger's arguments in 'Origins of the Work of Art', I will first look at the strife between the earth and the world in more detail. I will then turn to investigate how Heidegger maintains that this strife between the earth and the world manifests itself in the work of art.

Heidegger maintains that the earth in the description of the happening of truth does not refer to matter or to an astronomical idea of a planet but is that from which entities emerge as beings, it is the ground that makes it possible for beings to appear as beings: 'The earth is the spontaneous forthcoming of that which is continually self-secluding and to that extent sheltering and concealing' (OWA, 47; UK, 35). The earth always conceals beings from us and makes it impossible for us to fully comprehend these beings. This means that Being, as it allows beings to be revealed to us, at the same time, hides itself. That from which beings appear to us as beings remains hidden from us.

The world, on the other hand, is the sphere in which humans engage with beings. It is the opening of the world that allows for the appearance of beings. Heidegger explains that 'as the world opens up, the rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes a rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colours to glow, tones to sing, the words to speak' (OWA 45; UK, 32). Vycinas (1961: 152) elaborates on the meaning of the world by explaining that '[w]orld is not the sum or framework of all the beings, but is that which enables the beings to be beings. World is the openness of Being itself.' The world is always a historical world: truth unfolds differently in different historical periods and we always inhabit different historical worlds. Because the world cannot be understood as a framework or as another being, Heidegger does not say that the world is, but instead says that the worlds (Sallis, 1990: 176). So, the world

worlds, allowing beings to rise into presence. It is thus the opening of the clearing that allows entities to emerge as beings we can engage with.

To fully understand the nature of the strife between the earth and the world, they cannot be understood as separate entities, existing independently of each other. Instead, their relationship has to be understood as reciprocal. Heidegger explains:

> World and earth are essentially different from one another and yet are never separated. The world grounds itself on the earth, and the earth juts through the world. But the relation between earth and world does not wither away into the empty unity of opposites unconcerned with one another. The world, in resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening, it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering and concealing, tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there (OWA, 47: UK, 35).

The world cannot be understood without thinking of the earth, and the earth cannot be understood without thinking of the world. Although the world is where beings are revealed to humans, the earth, as concealment, still prevails in the world and beings never appear as fully unconcealed. Similarly, although the earth is the sphere of concealment, it does not exist independently of the world but always as a part of the world. So my grandparents' garden, and the grass, the trees and the apples growing in it, appear to me as beings because of the happening of truth that occurs as the world opens up. But when I am taking my evening walk in the garden amidst the apples, the truth of these apples remains hidden from me. I cannot explain or articulate what they are because the world is always striving with the concealing earth.

The essay that describes this strife between the earth and the world is called 'The Origins of the Work of Art' because the work of art plays an important role in this strife. Heidegger maintains that the work of art can set up the strife between the earth and the world. This happens when the artwork 'moves the earth itself into the Open of a world and keeps it there. *The work lets the earth be an earth*' (OWA: 45, UK: 32, emphasis original). Heidegger uses a Greek temple as an example of the kind of artwork that can accomplish this. He explains that

the temple 'first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being' (OWA: 43; UK; 30-31). As the work of art allows for the happening of truth and allows beings to appear as beings, it also allows historical community of people to come together.

So how is it that the work of art can set up a strife between the earth and the world? Dreyfus (2005: 415) suggests that this means that a work of art has the power to reconfigure a community's sense of themselves and establish new paradigms of understanding beings and new practices for a community. This would allow for new ways for beings to appear to us and for new ways in which truth can happen. I, however, agree with Young's (2001: 31-3) criticism of this account. Young argues that we cannot think of the work of art as creating these meanings because this would contradict Heidegger's account of Dasein as being always thrown into the world. Because of this, the work of art must describe a world that already exists. What Heidegger is attempting to describe here, I think, is that the work of art, by being able to portray the happening of truth and the strife between the earth and the world, may teach us to pay attention to the unfolding of Being. Or, as Young (2001: 52) explains, the artwork 'gathers together an entire culture to bear witness to the luminous salience of world which happens in the work'. The work of art can allow us to stop thinking that we can grasp beings by forming correct statements about them, and it can help a community to contemplate on what it is important for that community. In this sense, we can say that the work of art brings beings into unconcealedness.

But to fully comprehend Heidegger's description of the happening of truth, we need to think in detail about what the earth refers to and why beings are concealed from us. My initial, and as I will explain later, somewhat problematic, understanding was that the earth refers to the nonhuman environment. I understood the concealing earth as the mysterious

manner in which things unfold and change without humans being involved in this process. I will examine this way of thinking about the earth further here because it is a good starting point for thinking about the happening of truth and also because it is the interpretation of the earth that most environmentalist interpreters adopt (e.g. Holland, 1999: 141-5; Norris, 2011; Peters and Irwin, 2002; Schalow, 2006). This interpretation of the earth often draws on Heidegger's example of the happening of truth in the Greek temple. This is how Heidegger describes the Greek temple as an example of how a work of art can set up a world:

> Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the world draws up out of the rock the mystery of that rock's clumsy yet spontaneous support. Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so makes the storm manifest in its violence. The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, yet brings to light the light of day, the breath of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf, and its own repose brings out the raging of the sea. Tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter into distinctive shapes and thus come to appear as what they are (OWA: 41; UK: 28).

In this example of the temple that Heidegger gives, the earth does seem to refer to the growth and development of the earth that surrounds the temple and from which natural, nonhuman beings can grow and emerge as beings.

So what are the implications of this way of approaching the happening of truth? As Zimmerman (2003: 83) illustrates, in this way of thinking about the earth, the concealment of the earth emphasises how beings always retain a degree of relative autonomy when they emerge into unconcealment. Although a being can only be a being if it is encountered and interpreted as a being by Dasein, Dasein alone is not in charge of how the being is revealed. This, Zimmerman (2003: 83, emphasis original) explains, is because 'Dasein does not itself create the clearing, but instead is appropriated *as* it, Dasein is obliged to "care" for beings in part by letting them present themselves in ways that accord with their own inherent possibilities'.

So, according to this interpretation of the earth, when the apples reveal themselves to me in my grandparents' garden as apples, I must recognise that I will never be able to fully control the growth of these apples. My task is to nourish and care for them so that they can continue to reveal themselves, and I must try to avoid controlling the growth of these apples. To allow for the unfolding of truth it is necessary for me to accept that the apple itself, nourished by the concealing earth, has its own way of growing and unfolding that I will never be able to fully know and understand.

When the earth is interpreted in this manner, then the earth, in the context of the work of art that sets up the strife between the earth and the world, is understood as the material that the artwork is made of. The reason for the presence of concealment in the work of art lies in the fact that we cannot fully make sense of the significance of these materials. Young (2000: 47-8) explains how we can think of the concealing earth in the work of art:

> We notice the sensuous qualities, the "lustre and gleam", of the stone temple, the colours of a Van Gogh, the sound of the words in a Hölderlin poem. Yet the materials of the artwork are 'self-secluding'. Colours or sounds may be represented in terms of measurable wavelengths, the stone's weight in terms of numbers, yet we know that the colour, sound or weight itself is by no means fully captured in such representations. Hence in apprehending the artwork we become aware of the inadequacy of all our 'projections' fully to capture the nature of the material, aware that there is infinitely more to nature, to beings, than we can ever make intelligible to ourselves.

So the work of art is important because it brings into light the unintelligible material qualities of beings, demonstrating that even when beings appear to us as beings we cannot fully understand them.

This discussion on the happening of truth also brings us to another important concept in Heidegger's work that plays important role in green interpretations of Heidegger. This is the concept of letting be. In 'On the Essence of Truth', Heidegger explains that to encounter beings in their truth, we must refrain from attempting to arrive at accurate representations of them. Instead, we must let beings be, we must allow them to unconceal themselves to us and to always remain partly in concealment (ET: 144-5; WW: 83-4). In *Contributions* Heidegger

elaborates on this by maintaining that when we experience the truth of beings, when we allow beings to reveal themselves, we let beings 'appear in the light of Being as the beings that they are' (LH: 252; BH: 161-162). The German word for appearing that Heidegger uses here is 'erscheinen' which is related to the verb 'scheinen', which means to shine. So 'appearing' is another word related to light and making things visible. It is meant here in the sense of making beings visible by the light of Being. As Guignon (2011: 92) puts it, when we let beings be, 'we give things the breathing room they need to unfold in their own proper way, […] without foisting on them an interpretative schema determined by our interests and projects'. Thinking about Being, responding to the call of Being would, in this context, be about allowing apples to appear to us, respecting the fact that we cannot fully grasp how the apples appeared to us as beings.

As Heidegger begins to explore the question of truth, he also explores how Being reveals itself to us differently in different historical periods and how we have forgotten to question truth by reducing the happening of truth to correct statements. This forgetfulness culminates in what Heidegger calls technological thinking. I already touched upon the history of Being earlier when I looked at how Heidegger thought Western philosophy had forgotten to question Being. But having looked at the unfolding of truth, it is now possible to look in more detail at what Heidegger has to say about the history of Being. Heidegger starts by exploring how pre-Socratic thinkers had not yet fallen into this forgetfulness of Being. They were captivated by the mystery of Being, by the wonder of the realisation that beings are. This is where Heidegger locates what he calls the first beginning, the beginning of Western history. It is where beings first showed up as question-worthy, where men first asked about the truth of beings. However, the question of Being is not inquired after explicitly in the first beginning. Both beings and Being, for the Greeks, signified those things that are present, that rise into unconcealment from concealment, and then sink back into concealment. What this

means can, perhaps, be best grasped by paying attention to the role that the Greek gods play in the presencing of beings. In the familiar Christian understanding, God, the cause of beings, exists beyond beings. But Heidegger argues that for the Greeks, the gods are Being itself, yet they exist in beings. The gods shine forth from beings, allowing beings to shine in their Being as something extraordinary, pointing towards the truth of these beings (PE: 111; PG: 164-5). Being, then, appears as something extraordinary in beings as humans are directed towards questioning the truth of these beings.

However, already in this Greek experience of Being we can recognise the beginning of Western metaphysical thinking. The Greeks answer the question of Being by describing the presencing of a being in its truth. Here the question of truth is asked for the sake of beings, not for the sake of Being as such. Truth is understood in relation to a being: it is understood in relation to the coming to presence of beings as they emerge out of concealment. It was sufficient for the Greeks to be claimed by unconcealment, to experience its wonder in the face of the mystery of beings. This focus on beings, however, allowed for the transformation of the concept of truth from unconcealment into correctness: because the first beginning focused on the presencing of beings, it became possible to start thinking about the correctness of these present beings (CP: 164; BP 232).

The transformation of the meaning of truth already begins in Plato's writings. For Plato, the essence of a being is that which endures. However, he understands this endurance as something that endures permanently, persisting no matter what happens. It is through this kind of thinking that Plato starts to think of the essences of things in terms of their permanently enduring ideas (QCT, 30; FT, 32). With Plato, the Being of beings is no longer understood as unconcealment, but it is understood as the eternal idea, as the eternal form. These eternal ideas are what allow beings to emerge as visible:

> Every idea, the visible form of something, provides a look at what a being is in each case. Thus in Greek thinking the ideas enable something to appear in its whatness and thus be present in its stability. The ideas are what is in everything that is (PDT: 174-175; PLW: 134).

Focusing on the eternal ideas allows for the transformation of the concept of truth. Truth is no longer understood as unconcealment but it is transformed into correctness, it now signifies correspondence between the idea and a being. Heidegger argues that here 'the correspondence of our gaze in relation to the idea comes to dominate, and determines what is true as that which is correct' (PDT, 176- 181; PLW, 136-141). What counts is if we see beings correctly, in accordance with their idea. Plato's philosophy, however, is still different from Western representational thinking, and not a complete departure from pre-Socratic thought. Heidegger explains:

> [I]n a certain way Plato has to hold on to "truth" as still a characteristic of beings, because a being, as something present, has being precisely by appearing, and being brings unhiddenness with it. But at the same time, the inquiry into what is unhidden shifts in the direction of the appearing of the visible form, and consequently toward the act of seeing that is ordered to the visible form, and toward what is correct and toward the correctness of seeing. For this reason there is a necessary ambiguity in Plato's doctrine (PDT, 177; PLW, 137).

Because for Plato, a being can be true because it is present, because it appears from unhiddenness, Plato's thinking does not signify a complete turning away from the pre-Socratic experience of Being as unconcealment. Nevertheless, Plato takes the first step towards the forgetfulness of Being by understanding truth as correctness.

In the Middle Ages, truth continues to be understood as correctness. Something is correct only insofar as it corresponds to the idea of a particular being. But the idea is now understood differently to Plato, the idea is understood as something preconceived in the mind of God. In Christianity, another shift also takes place: beings are starting to be understood in terms of cause and effect, as something caused by the creator, and Being now comes to denote that being which is the cause of other beings (CP: 88; BP: 126-7). To be something now means to be created by God, the being that is the cause of other beings. In the Enlightenment period

this idea is taken further. The idea of creation is replaced by the capacity of objects to be ordered by human reason. Here, 'to be' something means to be an object understood by the rational human subject. Beings no longer emerge from unconcealment but they are something that humans organise, order and represent (CP: 77; BT: 110). Being is now transformed into what is most common to all beings. Its meaning also becomes empty, to the point that we can no longer say what it means to say that a being is (IM: 87; EM: 56). This signals the start of a technological way of revealing beings that I will investigate in the next section of the chapter.

Through his thinking of Being, Heidegger wants to prepare a way for another beginning that is able to again think about the question of Being. However, he is not advocating a return to the Greek way of thinking Being that so easily allowed the transformation of truth into correctness. Unlike in the first beginning, where truth was a characteristic of beings, in the other beginning, the question of Being will not be asked for the sake of beings but the truth of Being itself will be questioned and it will be recognised that 'being-present is, even where it is encountered in constancy, the most fleeting for the original projecting open of the truth of Being' (CP: 181; BP: 257).

Technological Thinking

Heidegger's later work concentrates on how the forgetting of Being culminates in technological thinking, on the consequences that technological thinking has for us and on how we might overcome this technological thinking. Heidegger's criticism of technological thinking was also a response to the industrialisation taking place in Germany, to the disappearance of smaller villages and communities with local cultures and to the growth of big cities. He maintained that new, industrial modes of production encourage ways of

engaging with beings that transform the manner in which we encounter beings. In his writings on technological thinking, Heidegger writes how, in the modern world, we are no longer engaging with beings in a way that allows them to appear in their truth. This is because a technological way of revealing which aims to find correct ways of representing beings begins to dominate the revealing of entities. Heidegger's criticism on technological thinking, as demonstrated by O'Brien (2011: 165), can also already be observed in a nascent form in *Being and Time*, in Heidegger's discussion of inauthenticity and in his descriptions of Dasein's everyday engagements with the world.

Heidegger discusses how we forget the question of Being already in *Contributions* where he identifies three interconnected ways in which this abandonment of Being shows itself. It shows itself in calculation, massiveness and acceleration. Calculation is grounded in the mathematical, which allows for arriving at exact definitions of entities and is able to use these definitions to efficiently order and organise entities. As a consequence, a lack of questioning takes hold and man comes to think that he can understand and represent beings through numbers. Everything must now be calculated, must 'be adjusted to the existing state of calculation' (CP: 84; BP: 120). That which is incalculable is simply that which cannot yet be calculated. For example, mass-produced apples in supermarkets are evaluated according to their shape and size, and those apples that do not conform to set sizes are discarded. The apples are marketed to the public as a measurable component of a healthy diet (as 'one of your five-a-day'), and some packs of apples even record the number of calories they contain.

Acceleration and massiveness describe the consequences of seeing the world in these calculable terms. Acceleration refers to our inability to bear stillness and listen to that which is concealed from us, to 'the stillness of hidden growth and awaiting' (CP: 84; BP: 121). Instead of listening to stillness, we become obsessed with immediate experiences. Thus, acceleration describes 'the mania for what is surprising, for what immediately sweeps away

and impresses' (CP: 84; BP: 121). Apples are able to provide us with excitement only when newly cultivated species of apples are being introduced in supermarkets. Quiet walks in the garden amidst the apple trees are able to satisfy us less and less, and our holidays are filled with trips to far-away lands in search of immediate experiences. We forget these experiences easily and are constantly looking for new ones to thrill us and occupy our time. Massiveness describes how things are now evaluated according to their quantity, and how quantity becomes a quality. The qualities of things are represented through calculations, and things are no longer experienced in their truth. The quality of our holiday, for example, is measured by how far we went, how many days we were gone and how many rhinos we were able to spot on our safari. As these three factors contribute to loss of meaning in the world, they also disguise this loss of meaning in a multitude of superficial lived experiences, hiding it from man (CP: 85-6; BP: 121-3).

Through calculation, acceleration and massiveness, the world is revealed to us differently, and this is what Heidegger, in his later works, called technological thinking. Technological thinking relies on calculations and mathematical representations of objects in order to achieve certainty that these representations are correct (AWP: 127; ZWB: 87). Thus, the truth of Being cannot unfold in beings, and we no longer respond to the call of Being. Manufacturing processes in a factory, for example, do not allow for things to reveal their truths to us but challenge objects forth. Factory workers do not work carefully with a given material in order to make unique works of handicraft but produce objects according to strictly defined requirements (QCT: 14-15; FT: 15). Things are ordered and produced for the sake of greater productivity. For example, apple jam sold in supermarkets is produced by machines in factories according to standardised recipes that attempt to minimize the amount of apple in the jam in search for higher profit margins. Resulting from this, things come to be seen as resources, they become mass-produced and uniform. But as I will demonstrate in more detail

later on the thesis, Heidegger here is not criticising all of our attempts to measure things, and he does not think that we should abandon technological thinking altogether. His concern is that technological thinking has now come to dominate the revealing of beings too much and he is worried that it might end up being the only way of revealing beings in the future.

Technological thinking, then, transforms the way in which we engage with the world and the role that we see ourselves playing in the world. As man focuses on ordering and organising objects, they no longer encounter these objects as the things that they are. Instead, they are encountered as resources, or as Heidegger calls it, standing-reserve. When things are understood as standing reserve, 'everywhere, everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for further ordering.' (QCT: 17). They are thus encountered as something we can represent through numbers, and as resources that can be used and exploited. Things are understood only in relation to the usefulness they have for humans. But it is not only the things that man makes that come to be seen as standing-reserve:

> As soon as what it unconcealed no longer concerns man even as an object, but does so, rather, exclusively as standing reserve, then he comes to the very brink of a precipitous fall; that is, he comes to the point where he himself will have to be taken as standing-reserve. Meanwhile, man, precisely as the one so threatened exalts himself to the posture of lord of the earth. In this way the impression comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct (QCT: 26-7; FT: 27-8).

Man is now understood as standing-reserve as well, as a resource that can order and manufacture entities. But man fails to notice how he, too, has been reduced to standing-reserve, and thinks that his position has been elevated because he is now able to efficiently order and represent beings (QCT: 18; FT: 18). This is illustrated, for example, by the copious newspaper articles discussing how we should best spend our holidays during the summer so that these holidays can provide us with the maximum amount of rest and so that we can again work through the autumn and winter as efficiently as possible. The experiences of far-away

lands and cultures that we chase on our holidays are often chased for the sake of refreshing ourselves so that we can be more productive at work, function better as a resource. Even gardening and growing apples can be seen as a resource, as something that allows us to rest, to take a break, and become more productive workers.

So how could we overcome technological thinking and arrive at a different way of relating to beings? In 'Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger introduces the concept of *poesis* in order to explain how humans can engage with things in a way that allows them to be revealed not as resources but as the beings that they are. He argues that when humans engage with the world through *poesis*, they understand that they alone are not in control of how entities emerge into unconcealment. This happens, for example, when things are made and revealed through crafts and arts. *Poeisis* plays a role when a carpenter is working with wood to make a table. The carpenter understands that he alone is not in control of the manufacturing process but the wood also participates in it, as well as culturally mediated ideas of what a table should look like and what a table should be used for. The craftsman cannot know in advance exactly what the end product will be because in each manufacturing process, (s)he brings the different elements, that are part of the bringing the thing into appearance, together in different and unique ways. The craftsman thus works in harmony with the thing being manufactured. *Poeisis,* then, is a way of revealing that allows for the unfolding of Being and for the happening of truth (QCT: 10; FT: 12). It allows things to show up as they are, without imposing definitions and representations on them.

In addition to discussing *poesis,* Heidegger also recognises that not every being emerging into the world has been made by humans. He emphasises this by introducing *phusis* as a special case of *poeisis*. In 'Question Concerning Technology', *phusis* describes a thing emerging into unconcealment on its own accord, without human involvement. Heidegger maintains that *phusis* is *poeisis* in the highest sense: '[f]or what presences by means of *phusis*

has the bursting open belonging to bringing-forth, e.g., the bursting of a blossom into bloom, in itself' (QCT: 10-11; FT 12). *Phusis* is also the Greek word for nature, and it will be an important concept when thinking about Heidegger and green politics in this thesis. Common green ways of thinking about *phusis* refer to it as the spontaneous growth and development of a particular set of nonhuman natural things in a similar way to the green interpretations of the earth. I will adopt this way of thinking about *phusis* for now, and will return to discussing this concept at the end of this chapter. The next section of the chapter will now move on to look at how we can resist technological thinking in more depth by investigating how Heidegger introduces the idea of dwelling in the fourforld of the earth, the sky, the gods and the mortals as something that can help us overcome technological thinking.

Dwelling

We can now see how, in Heidegger's later work, the question of Being is no longer only a question of how humans make sense of the world. It now becomes about explaining how humans learn to let beings be when they do not try to represent beings, but instead, allow beings to appear as the beings that they are, in their concealment. This understanding of the happening of truth already began touching on some environmental themes through an exploration of how the earth participates in the happening of truth. These themes become even more prevalent in Heidegger's later writings where he explores further how we can learn to question Being and overcome technological thinking. Heidegger does this by developing a concept of dwelling in two lectures, 'Building Dwelling Thinking' and 'The Thing'. In these lectures, he describes how humans learn to dwell when they allow what he calls a fourfold, consisting of the earth, the sky, the divinities and the mortals, to enter into things. Because Heidegger does not discuss the meaning of the four elements of the fourfold in great detail, understanding what he says requires careful interpretation of his words and

knowledge of these themes in Heidegger's other works. It is to this task of making sense of the fourfold that I will now turn.

The easiest way to start thinking about the different elements of the fourfold is to start with the earth and the sky. The concept of the earth, that was already present in Heidegger's account on the happening of truth, now re-appears in his works on dwelling. However, in Heidegger's later works, the way in which he talks about the earth changes. Maybe the biggest change that takes place in how Heidegger talks about the earth is that the earth no longer strives with the world, but it now becomes a part of the world, it describes the concealment of entities as we encounter them in the world (Fell, 1979: 200). When Heidegger is talking about the earth as one member of the fourfold, he also pairs the earth with the sky: to dwell on the worlded earth now means to simultaneously dwell under the sky. However, as Dastur (1999: 141n.2, c.f. Kockelmans, 1984: 105-11) explains, although the way in which Heidegger talks about the earth changes and references to the sky are missing from 'Origins of the Work of Art', this does not mark a radical shift in the way in which Heidegger thinks about the earth. Heidegger is now using both the sky and the earth to describe how the concealing earth of 'Origins of the Work of Art' emerges into the world.

The earth, Heidegger explains in 'Building Dwelling Thinking', is the ground on which we learn to dwell. It 'is the serving bearer, blossoming and fruiting, spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal' (BDT: 147; BWD: 151). And the sky, he explains, is 'the vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the year's seasons and their changes, the light and dusk of day, the gloom and glow of night, the clemency and the inclemency of the weather' (BDT: 147; BWD: 151). Due to the imagery that Heidegger employs here, I initially interpreted the earth and the sky in a similar manner as I understood the earth in 'Origins of the Work of Art'. I understood the sky and the earth as referring literally to the sky and to the earth, as elements which allow for the growth

of nonhuman natural beings. As Mark Wrathall (2011: 205, emphasis original) elaborates, according to this popular interpretation '[t]he earth *is* the earth beneath our feet, the earth that spreads out all around us as mountains and in trees, in rivers and streams. The sky *is* the sky above our heads, the starts and constellations, the sun and the moon, the shifting weather that brings changing seasons.' I will return to these interpretations of the sky and the earth towards the end of the chapter, and explore some of the contradictions that arise from this literal way of understanding the sky and the earth. But despite their problems, these interpretations can serve as good initial introductions to dwelling and the fourfold. Even if we end up concluding that Heidegger is not referring to sky and the earth in a literal sense, because of the descriptions that he uses to illustrate the meaning of dwelling, this is at least where Heidegger wants us to begin our journey of thinking about the meaning of dwelling.

So how can we learn to dwell on the earth and under the sky? Heidegger explains that humans dwell when they 'receive the sky as sky. They leave to sun and the moon their journey, to the stars their courses, to the seasons their blessings and their inclemency; they do not turn night into day nor day into harassed unrest' (BDT: 148; BWD: 152). If the earth and the sky are understood in a literal sense, then this means that if we want to learn to dwell, we should adopt a similar non-interfering attitude towards the earth and the sky as was already discussed when the concealing earth in 'Origins of the Work of Art' was being explored: we should recognise that the earth and the sky have their own autonomous ways of unfolding and revealing themselves. By letting the sky be a sky and the earth be an earth, we respect this autonomy of the sky and the earth, and allow them to unfold in their own distinct ways.

What Heidegger means by mortals and gods is harder to grasp. By mortals, Heidegger refers to humans. Humans are called mortals because they 'can die. To die means to be capable of death as death. Only man dies, and indeed continually, as long as he remains on earth, under the sky, before divinities' (BDT: 148; BWD: 152). Heidegger does not spend

long explaining why he chooses to call humans mortals here, but the finite existence of humans is not a new theme in his work. This theme was already present in *Being and Time*. As was explored earlier in this chapter, in *Being and Time* Heidegger explained how Dasein attempts to forget his/her finite existence, the fact that there is no supreme being, such as the Christian God or Descartes' knowing subject, that allows for forming objective truths about beings and allows for securely grounding our knowledge of the world. Humans attempt to forget this by busying themselves in everyday activities, by forgetting themselves amidst beings. But by coming to terms with his/her own finite existence, humans can learn to question Being and, in the end, attain a more fulfilling life (BT: 230-234; ZT: 247-250). Thus, this focus on mortals highlights that Being is unconcealed to humans in many different ways and that humans, as temporal beings, can never find any universally valid, correct ways of defining and explaining beings (Dastur, 2000: 130).

Heidegger has even less to say about the meaning of the gods. He explains that gods are the 'beckoning messengers of the godhead. Out of the holy sway of the godhead, the god appears in his presence or withdraws into his concealment' (BDT: 148; BWD: 151). He does not go further into detail when explaining what these gods are, but clues to what they might refer to can be found in Heidegger's other writings. Julian Young (2002: 95-8) explains that in 'Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger talks about the gods in reference to 'divine destinings' that give people their laws and customs, and he equates the gods with our heritage, which communicates how we are in the world. In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger talks about the gods in a similar manner. He explains that the there in which Dasein dwells is the between of men that ground history and the gods that are historical (CP: 219; BP: 311-312). It is, however, difficult to find a way of clearly explaining what these gods are without moving to talk about something else. The gods, simply put, allow us to overcome technological thinking, thinking of the truth of beings in terms of correctness, and

allow for the unfolding of the concealing earth. As Kovacs (1990: 186) explains, gods give guidance for mortals for living rich and fulfilling lives by 'providing poetic insight into the "place" of human living "between heaven and earth"'.

Heidegger maintains that mortals learn to dwell when they await for the appearance of the gods:

> They wait for intimations of their coming and do not mistake the signs of their absence. They do not make their gods for themselves and do not worship idols. In the very depth of misfortune they wait for the weal that has been withdrawn (BDT: 148; BWD: 152).

He emphasises waiting for gods here because humans are mortal and they can only have a finite understanding of the world. This means that mortals can never fully explain what these gods are, how they appear to us and allow us to dwell. Instead, mortals can only await for their appearance (see e.g. Fell, 1985).

However, it is important not to focus too much on attempting to gain an understanding of what the elements of the fourfold refer to and what role they play in allowing us to dwell. This is what Heidegger has to say about how we should think about the fourfold in 'The Thing':

> As soon as human cognition here calls for an explanation, it fails to transcend the world's nature, and it falls short of it. The human will to explain just does not reach to the simpleness of the simple onefold of worlding. The united four are already entangled in their essential nature when we think of them only as separate realities, which are to be grounded in and explained by one another (Thing, 177-8; Ding: 181).

So this means that the descriptions of the earth, the sky, the divinities and the mortals that Heidegger offers are not meant to be separate elements and exact definitions of the functioning of the fourfold. Instead, they are poetic descriptions of the fourfold that allow us to start thinking of the fourfold without ever being able to explicitly state what this fourfold is.

Heidegger elaborates on this in an essay called '…Poetically Man Dwells…' where he explores the relationship between poetry and learning to dwell. Here Heidegger maintains that poetry is the nature of dwelling. This is because poetry is measure-taking. But poetry is not measuring in the sense of using measuring rods to calculate and mathematically represent things. Instead, it takes measure in a more mysterious sense. Poetry gives mortals their dwelling place by taking measure of the earth and the sky, allowing mortals to exist on the earth, under the skies by showing the gods as gods (PMD: 220-221; DWM: 203). Instead of relying on exact calculations and measurements, poetry allows for this measure-taking by making mysterious images that allow the gods to be seen (see also Elden, 2001: 83). Heidegger explains that these images are 'not mere fantasies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the familiar. The poetic saying of images gathers the brightness and sound of the heavenly appearances into one with the darkness and silence of what is alien.' (PMD: 223-224; DWM: 204-205, translation modified). Poetic language, then, helps us think about what it means to question Being.

Thinking of poetry as making these mysterious images helps make sense of the poetic language that Heidegger uses to describe the fourfold. Poetry is not measure-taking with measuring rods, and to poetically describe the fourfold does not mean that we should attempt to give precise definitions of each of its four elements. Rather, Heidegger's aim is to paint a mysterious picture of the fourfold that allows us to start thinking about our dwelling place on the earth and under the sky, amidst our gods. This description of the fourfold guides us in our attempts to start thinking of dwelling, while, at the same time, preserving the fourfold in its mystery, never attempting to fully represent it.

Heidegger, then, is only using this description of the fourfold in a poetic sense, not as something that can be explained and categorised, but as a guide for us to learn to think about Being. In the end, the elements of the fourfold are not separate elements at all: '[e]ach of the

four mirrors in its own way the presence of others. Each therewith reflects itself in its own way into its own, within the simpleness of the four' (Thing: 177; Ding: 180). The earth, the sky, the divinities and the mortals always exist together, mirroring each other. In this mirroring, each of the elements of the fourfold are reflected as separate but they nevertheless belong together, exist in a unity.

Now that we have some idea of the meaning of the fourfold, we can start looking at what it means to dwell and to let the fourfold into things, and how learning to dwell can help us think about Being. Heidegger gives a number of concrete examples that illustrate how humans can learn to dwell on the earth, how we can refrain from controlling our environments and how things can come to matter to us. In these examples, dwelling is about engaging with our environments in such a way that the fourfold can be allowed to enter into things (BDT: 149: BWD: 155). In 'The Thing' Heidegger describes a clay jug to explain how we can experience beings as the beings that they are, and how the mysterious fourfold can be experienced in things. He explains that we can try to describe the jug in scientifically correct terms. The jug is a container, and we can measure its dimensions. But although these descriptions of the jug may be correct, they are unable to describe the truth of the jug. We understand the jug as a thing only if we allow the fourfold to enter into the jug. Heidegger explains how the fourfold is gathered together when water is poured from the jug. The earth and sky are present in the water that is being poured:

> The spring stays on in the water of the gift. In the spring the rock dwells, and in the rock dwells the dark slumber of the earth, which receives the rain and the dew of the sky. In the water of the spring dwells the marriage of sky and earth.[…] But the gift of the outpouring is what makes the jug a jug. In the jugness of the jug, sky and earth dwell (Thing: 170; Ding: 174).

Thus, the jug, and the water in the jug, are not made only by humans, but the sky and the earth play a part in the revealing of the jug, and are always present in the gift of the outpouring.

The gods and the mortals are also present in the outpouring: '[t]he gift of the pouring is a gift for mortals. It quenches their thirst. It refreshes their leisure. It enlivens their conviviality' (Thing, 170; Ding: 174). Mortals do not only pour water from the jug because they are thirsty, but this pouring always happens in a particular context and has meaning beyond quenching thirst. We might be sharing the jug of water with our friends, the water can refresh us, helping us enjoy the gathering with friends. The gods are the ones whose appearance can make this outpouring an extraordinary event for us. The jug, which from a scientific viewpoint was only a container with certain geometric dimensions that can be filled with liquid, now acquires new meanings:

> In the gift of the outpouring, mortals and divinities each dwell in their different ways. Earth and sky dwell in the gift of the outpouring. In the gift of the outpouring earth and sky, divinities and mortals dwell *together at once*. These four, at one because of what they themselves are, belong together. Preceding everything that is present, they are enfolded in a single fourfold (Thing: 170; Ding: 174).

The jug, then, is no longer a mere container with certain geometric dimensions. As the fourfold is experienced in the jug, the jug becomes something different and extraordinary.

Technological thinking, concentrating on representing beings, makes it harder to stay with things. Heidegger explains how in the modern age we are no longer able to remain near to things:

> Man now reaches overnight, by plane, places which formerly took weeks and months of travel. He now receives instant information, by radio, of events which he formerly learned about only years later, if at all. The germination and growth of plants, which remained hidden throughout the seasons, is now exhibited publicly in a minute, on film. Distant sites of most ancient cultures are shown on film as if they stood this moment amidst today's street traffic. Moreover, the film attests to what it shows by presenting also the camera and its operators at work. The peak of this abolition of every possibility of remoteness is reached by television, which will soon pervade and dominate the whole machinery of communication (Thing: 163; Ding: 167).

So here Heidegger explains how modern technology has abolished physical distances and made things more accessible. But when we become pre-occupied with abolishing physical distances and representing beings, we lose the ability to bring the fourfold into things, to stay with beings and to be near them. While the accelerated pace of our lives might allow us to

travel more and farther, to see more of the world, the immediate experiences which we have of things nevertheless does not ensure that we stay with things, experience them in their nearness. These experiences remain just experiences that are forgotten quickly as we hurry onwards in search of new experiences.

What is interesting in the account of dwelling is the focus on how we can learn to dwell when we stay with particular things. Unlike in 'Origins of the Work of Art', Heidegger is no longer describing how great works of art can help a community reflect on what is important for that community. In these later works on dwelling, he is more interested in how we can learn to dwell when we learn to stay with everyday things. Indeed, there can be no fourfold without the existence of the things which can gather the fourfold (Mitchell, 2010: 215). Heidegger elaborates on this by explaining that 'staying with things, however, is not something attached to this fourfold as a fifth something. On the contrary: staying with things is the one way in which the fourfold stay within the fourfold is accomplished at any time in simple unity' (BDT: 149; BWD: 153). So it is through staying with everyday things that we can allow for the unfolding of the fourfold. Heidegger's description of how we can let the fourfold unfold in the jug was an example of this kind of staying. Furthermore, the focus here is no longer how a community of people can gain a sense of what is important for that community but the focus is now on how staying with things can help us on our own personal journeys of dwelling.

I can also think of the fourfold as something that gathers together as I learn to dwell in my grandparents' garden and stay with the trees that grow there. When I do this, I learn to pay attention to the earth as the soil from which the apple trees grow and to the sky as that which nourishes the trees, providing sunshine and water, allowing the trees to burst into bloom as spring arrives. I can learn to dwell in the garden as a mortal if I learn to pay attention to the flourishing of the sky and the earth and to my own finite understanding of them, and I can

allow for the presence of the gods if I allow the apple trees to appear as apple trees, contemplating them without trying to explain what they are, allowing them to bloom and bear fruit without regulating this process too much. I can also dwell with the apples in the autumn when I bake a pie and share it with friends, if I pay attention to how the earth and the sky, which have unfolded in the growth of the apples, contribute to their distinctive flavour, to how the apples taste a certain way because of the soil and the climate that allowed them to grow. The gods are present in the baking of the pie, allowing apples to be revealed as fruit that can be baked into a pie. The gods are also present as mortals gather together to eat the pie, they can bring back memories of the warm summers which allow apples to grow and of past cold autumns spent in the warm indoors eating apple pies. When this happens, we learn to stop thinking of the apple pie as a resource, and begin to allow for the unfolding of the fourfold in this gathering, we learn to stay with the apple pie and begin to dwell.

Heidegger and Green Thinking

Heidegger's descriptions of the role of the earth in the strife between the earth and the sky and his description of the roles that the earth and the sky play in dwelling in the fourfold have prompted many green thinkers to investigate how Heidegger's thinking could help us find an alternative way of thinking about green politics. Some environmental themes in Heidegger's thinking were already hinted at when the roles the earth and the earth and the sky play in the happening of truth and in dwelling were explored. Heidegger makes even more links with green thinking as he discusses the meaning of *phusis,* the Greek word for nature, in 'Question Concerning Technology'. Nature, here, as that which emerges into appearance on its own accord, is introduced as something that should not be controlled and manipulated according to the will of man. Instead, we must allow natural beings to reveal themselves to us as they are. Smith elaborates these sentiments as follows:

> [T]he monsoon does not become meaningful simply because certain social practices ascribe meaning to it. It is meaningful because it too is party to a particular 'form of life'. It is because the effects it produces make an impression on that mode of being in the world that they are carried over into its linguistic tradition. This impression is the monsoon's message (Smith, 2001: 69).

Nature, then, for Heidegger, seems to be something that we should not try to control and regulate. Instead, we should allow it to grow and unfold on its own accord.

Heidegger also explicitly discusses how technological thinking has an impact on the environment. With technological thinking, the environment is not understood in its own terms but it is understood as an object for science that organises and manipulates nature in the name of efficiency (CP: 349; BP: 349). In 'Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger explains that when technological thinking dominates, man makes demands on the environment: the environment is shaped according to human will, organised and manipulated to ensure an efficient extraction of resources from it. Heidegger uses energy production as an example of this. He maintains that technology 'puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such' (QCT: 14; FT: 15). The hydroelectric plant on the river Rhine, for example, does not reveal the Rhine as the river that it is but makes demands on the river. It sets the Rhine to provide pressure to turn turbines, forcing the river appear as something that is under human command. The river is no longer a river, but a supplier of power (QCT: 16; FT: 16). In a similar manner, industrial farming methods no longer allow apples to be apples. They do not allow apples to emerge into unconcealment on their own accord, in a variety of different shapes and flavours. Instead, apples are challenged forth as uniformly shaped apples are produced as efficiently as possible. They lose their distinctive flavour because the earth is no longer able to strife with the world in the apples. Technological thinking no longer allows for questioning how natural entities rise into unconcealment on their own accord, how the concealment of the earth always remains a part of these entities and how humans can never fully know the truth of beings. According to this

way of reading Heidegger, then, to protect nature, we must resist technological thinking and allow natural things to grow and unfold on their own; we must learn to question the unfolding of *phusis*.

So how have Heidegger's ideas been used to make sense of environmental degradation and the aims of green politics? This kind of a reading of *phusis* allows for diagnosing the root causes of environmental degradation. Irwin (2011, see also Hodge, 1995; Joronen, 2011, Skocz: 2009), for example, provides a detailed account of how Heidegger's philosophy reveals that the illusion that we can calculate and control the unfolding of the earth is the root cause of current environmental problems. Heidegger's philosophy demonstrates that attempts to control pollution and regulate climate change are in vain because we can never calculate and model the unfolding of nature nor can we mathematically represent the different ways in which the truth of nature unfolds.

Heidegger's thinking also suggests new ways of thinking about how to confront environmental degradation. The solution to environmental problems is not to find more efficient ways of controlling and regulating the environment but to find an altogether new way of relating to nature, one that does not attempt to find correct ways of representing it but allows nature to unfold in its own way, no longer reducing nature to a resource (Padrutt, 2009: 33-4). This can happen when humans learn to question Being. Foltz (1995: 136) elaborates on this as follows:

> Paying attention to *phusis* as self-emergence helps to understand why using nature efficiently as a resource is unable to unconceal the truth of nature. Natural entities are not there only to be utilised and researched, but they have their own autonomy and their own mystery, they come forth and linger of their own accord (Foltz, 1995: 127).

Dwelling in the fourfold can also be understood as an act of protecting the environment. To take care of the environment, we should concentrate on allowing the earth to remain the earth

and on allowing the sky to remain a sky. As Smith (2007: 188) explains, 'if we are to preserve the sky as a sky, we cannot negate the effects of night and day, of summer and winter. Man cannot live as human in a temperature- and light- controlled terrarium'. Wrathall (2011: 206) also explains how we learn to dwell when we 'incorporate into our practices the particular features of the environment around us', when we incorporate 'the peculiar features of the temporal cycles of the heavens, the day and the night, the seasons and the weather' (Wrathall, 2011: 206-7). In short, we learn to dwell when we adapt to our environments, without trying to control and regulate how things appear to us. We must allow the sky to be a sky, accept the changing weather and the changing seasons, and learn to live with the sky instead of trying to control and regulate it. Similarly, we must allow the earth to be an earth by allowing things to grow and reveal themselves in their own distinct ways. It is only if we allow *phusis* to unfold in its own way, allow the earth and the sky to enter into fourfold, that we can protect nature.

Many environmental actions, that are understood from a more conventional environmental politics perspective as resource management, gain new meanings when they are considered from the perspective of questioning and protecting Being. Foltz explains:

> [C]omposting can only be saving the earth's own nourishment, which grants to it its darkness, heaviness, pungency, and pace. Recycling can be a reminder that even the aluminium can bear the pliant yet sustaining character of the earth itself – and hence can be a saving of that character along with the metal. And wilderness areas may be genuinely saved as those places of the earth where the mystery of self-seclusion consorts in splendour with the wonder of self-emergence (Foltz, 1995: 166).

Dwelling, thus, can help think about environmental actions in a different way. Although similar in their practical consequences, Foltz maintains that these approaches to protecting the environment differ from conventional environmental politics because they are not undertaken for the sake of efficiently regulating natural resources. Instead, they are undertaken for the sake of protecting earth, for the sake of dwelling on earth, and for the sake of feeling homely (Foltz, 1995: 166, see also Maly, 2009: 52-3). In a similar manner, Young

(2002: 104) explains that dwelling on the earth means to experience and question Being, to allow the fact there is a world and that there are beings to fill us with wonder. This wonder guides us to care for the earth. We can care for the earth, for example, through organic farming that 'cultivates crops that bring forth the potentialities of the local soil' (Young, 2002: 108), and by building houses in a way that conserves the landscape in which they are built (Young, 2002: 109). These actions are not performed in order to efficiently manage beings but they are aimed at allowing us to question Being, at resisting technological thinking and allowing the earth to unfold on its own accord. Young also emphasises that what is important about Heidegger's writings is not that he has some ideas in regards to how the earth can be made a dwelling place for humans, but that 'these attractive ideas are *grounded,* grounded in his philosophy of [B]eing' (Young, 2002: 121, emphasis original). Thus, environmental actions are undertaken for the sake of dwelling and for the sake of questioning Being.

Allowing for this unfolding of nature and allowing the fourfold to enter into things can lead to concrete environmental actions. For example, giving thought to how apples reveal themselves to me can allow me to learn how to take care of the apples in my grandparents' garden, how to grow apples in a way that does not harm the surrounding environment. It can also encourage me to act in an environmentally friendly way even when I am not in the countryside. Paying attention to how the apple reveals itself in the fourfold can remind me of the changing seasons of the sky and encourage me to consume locally produced apples in the autumn when they are in season. It might also result in remembering the autonomy of the earth and in not wanting to buy uniformly shaped apples, choosing instead to purchase apples from a small producer who takes better care of the earth from which the apples grow and allows them to appear in different shapes and sizes.

Initially, I found these kinds of readings of Heidegger and green politics attractive because they seemed to answer many of the questions I had in regards to how we might think about nature, and how thinking about nature can impact environmental practices. They allow for articulating why nature seems to be so important for us, what is important about the concept of nature that cannot be articulated through the language provided by ANT. Paying attention to nature, letting go of technological thinking and allowing beings to unfold to us as the beings that they are, is important because it allows us to overcome thinking of things in terms of resources and allows us to live richer and more fulfilling lives. This is why it is important for green politics to not just focus on preventing environmental degradation but to focus on protecting the unfolding of nature.

Heidegger's philosophy can also be used to respond to some of the critics of the idea of nature. His thinking allows us to recognise that nature is complex, and that we cannot explain exactly what we mean when we say that something is a part of nature. His criticism of truth and his description of the unfolding of *phusis* mean that we cannot understand the unfolding of nature and that we cannot explain what nature is. As Seckinelgin (2006) explains, although there can be no objective truths about nature, this does not mean that we can have no knowledge of nature. We need to recognise that nature can reveal itself to us in many different ways, and that any knowledge we have of nature can never be a final, definitive way of understanding nature. We can now start thinking of nature as something that emerges out of unconcealment on its own accord, and reveals itself to humans in different ways (Seckinelgin, 2006: 109; see also DeLuca, 2005). Natural entities, then, are no longer things that we can represent and control, but things that we engage with and give meaning to, while still allowing them retain their own autonomy and to reveal themselves to us in their own distinct ways

This way of thinking about nature has also been used to provide an answer to those who maintain that we cannot talk about nature because the natural and the social are so intertwined that we cannot separate these two from each other. It is true that thinking of Heidegger's *phusis* does not change radically the set of entities to which nature refers. For Foltz, for example, self-emergence can be seen in those processes that we conventionally understand as natural. Foltz (1995: 126) maintains that *phusis* can be seen 'in the rising sun, and in the emergence of the grain of seed sunk deep into the earth, the sprouting of the young shoot, the emerging and unfolding of the blossom'. Foltz recognises that self-emergence can also occur in entities that are not normally understood as nature. Nevertheless, he maintains that *phusis* applies primarily to natural processes because in these things of nature 'the self-emergent character of being is most manifest' (Foltz, 1995: 126-7). An apple, for example, reveals itself through *phusis* as it grows from a flower and turns into a fruit. But this still does not mean that an apple can be an apple independently of humans. Human activity is required for beings to appear as beings. Although the apple can unconceal itself without direct human involvement, it becomes a being only when it is revealed to humans as an apple, and when humans engage with the apple in a way that allows it to be an apple.

Heidegger's description of the fourfold as the interplay of the earth, the sky, the divinities and the mortals also demonstrates that nature can never be unconcealed to us as something purely nonhuman but it can only be revealed when mortals interact with the sky and the earth. In the interpretation of Heidegger presented here, the fourfold is the meeting place of nature and culture, where mortals always measure and interpret the earth and the sky with the gods as a guide (Cloke and Jones, 2007: 651). Thus, as Malpas (2006: 237) explains, the gathering of the fourfold into a thing 'is not merely "natural" such that it occurs apart from the made. Instead their character as things is a testament to the way in which the natural and the made grow together in and thought them.' For example, we cannot say that the apple belongs to the

sky and the earth or to the gods and the mortals because it is always a part of both. It is also important to note that Heidegger is not advocating any kind of attitude of non-interference towards nature. Letting the sky be a sky and the earth an earth does not mean that mortals should leave the sky and the earth untouched. Rather, the earth and sky are preserved when mortals engage with their environments in a way that allows the fourfold to enter into things (Young, 2002).

However, a closer examination of these green interpretations of nature reveals some problems in them. Firstly, it reveals that these Heideggerian interpretations of green politics are not able to fully respond to challenges posed by those who maintain that we cannot draw clear distinctions between human and nonhuman environments. Although this way of thinking about nature as *phusis*, or as the earth and the sky, overcomes some of the problems associated with thinking about nature, this approach to nature remains problematic. It still does not explain what the unfolding of natural beings, that takes place independently of human involvements, is. Can we talk about this unfolding as something that happens independently of humans? The environmental conditions that allow for the growth of apples, for example, are largely created by humans. There are very few places on the earth where an apple tree could grow and develop without humans being somehow involved in shaping the environment in which the tree grows.

But if this is the case, why am I still trying to use Heidegger to make sense of nature, why do I still think that he could be helpful in making sense of the role of the concept of nature in green politics? This is because there is also an internal contradiction in the way that green thinkers approach Heidegger's work. This suggests that the initial understanding of what Heideggerian green politics looks like presented in this chapter is not entirely accurate and that there are better ways of thinking about the role of nature in Heidegger's work. To understand why this way of approaching Heidegger is problematic, I am going to look in

more detail at how we might allow for the unfolding of the earth. As an example, to allow the earth to unfold in the growth of apple trees, we might decide to adopt organic farming methods to start growing apples. Organic farming, as was explored above, is a popular example given by Heideggerian green thinkers of the kind of behaviour that allows for the unfolding of the earth because it does not aim to regulate this unfolding, but allows the earth to grow and develop on its own accord. A closer examination of what organic farming entails, however, reveals problems in this way of reading Heidegger. Beginning to grow apples organically does not mean that we just throw some apple seeds in the garden. Instead, we have to be quite involved in this process. Only certain kinds of apples are resistant enough to pests to be farmed organically and therefore, we have to be careful about the species of apples we grow. We also need to choose good organic fertilisers, and we need a way of dealing with pests; we can do this by attracting predator species to eat the pests or we can use organic pesticides. So the idea behind organic farming might be to interfere less with our environments, but the details of how this should happen is based on scientific knowledge and research, it is reliant on making correct evaluations of what allows apples to grow and what does not. A closer examination, then, reveals that this way of thinking about the unfolding of the concealing earth is still reliant on making correct statements about what allows things to grow out of the earth and what does not. And this is problematic because, as I explained earlier, Heidegger claimed that forming these kinds of correct statements about beings does not help us make sense of what allows beings to appear to us as beings, and it cannot help us in thinking about how we might allow for the unfolding of *phusis.*

It is the focus on finding ways of addressing environmental problems that seems to be the problem here. These green interpreters of Heidegger do explain that they are not attempting to find solutions to specific environmental problems but are proposing fostering a different kind of attitude towards the nonhuman environment that lets go of thinking about protecting

nature in terms of problems and solutions (e.g. Foltz, 1995: 166; Holland 1999; Young, 2002: 121). But proposing a shift in our attitudes towards nature as a response to environmental crisis already is a kind of a solution: it requires making certain correct judgements about the way in which the earth unfolds and still remains a part of technological thinking.

So if this is the case, if we cannot make sense of unfolding earth through these kinds of scientific investigations into environmentally friendly actions, then how could Heidegger's thinking help us avoid environmental degradation? Dreyfus (1997: 99) argues that for Heidegger, the threat posed by technological thinking is not the threat of environmental destruction but this threat is found from the way in which technological thinking affects the way we see the world, the way it restricts our understanding of Being (see also Vaden, 2006: 25). Heidegger, indeed, seems to state this explicitly in 'The Thing':

> Man stares at what the explosion of the atom bomb could bring with it. He does not see that the atom bomb and its explosion are the mere final emission of what has long since taken place, has already happened […] What is it that unsettles and thus terrifies? It shows itself and hides itself in the *way* in which everything presences, namely, in the fact that despite all conquest of distances the nearness of things remains absent (Thing: 164; Ding: 168, emphasis original).

Thus, it is not the disappearance of life on earth that concerns Heidegger but the fact that humans have lost the ability to experience things in their nearness. But if Heidegger's main concern was not to prevent environmental degradation, then we need a different way of thinking about *phusis,* the earth and the sky in his works. These terms can no longer be equated with the growth of a set of supposedly nonhuman natural beings. To address these concerns, the next chapter of the thesis will go on to propose an alternative way of thinking about these concepts.

Conclusion

This chapter has begun answering the question of the role that nature plays in green politics, of how we should think about this concept that seems to be so difficult to explain but nevertheless seems to communicate something important about green goals. It has done this by exploring how Heidegger's philosophy can offer new avenues for thinking about nature and green politics. Heidegger's account of the clearing, of truth as an interplay between revealing and concealing, and his description of the fourfold are all important starting points for thinking about nature as they highlight that nature is not something that can be defined and explained. However, it seems that the many attempts to try to elaborate the consequences that Heidegger's philosophy has for thinking about green politics have not been entirely successful. They take an important first step in thinking about nature as something that cannot be thought about in terms of correct statements, but they still understand nature as something that applies to a particular set of beings, and interpret the earth and the sky of the fourfold literally. As a consequence, they are still attempting to find best possible ways of preserving natural beings. Although these green accounts of Heidegger begin by investigating how he questions Being, when they move to explore in more concrete terms what a Heideggerian green politics could look like, they begin to focus on how to ensure the survival of natural beings. Heidegger's task of questioning Being, questioning what allows these beings to appear as beings in the first place, seems to be forgotten.

Because of these problems, I concluded that nature in Heidegger's philosophy cannot refer to a set of nonhuman natural beings, and the sky and the earth in his work cannot be understood in a literal sense. In the next chapter, I will begin developing a different way of understanding Heidegger's thinking of nature, the earth and the sky, a way that does not try so hard to explain what exactly these concepts refer to. This allows for an alternative account of nature of Heidegger's thought, and for an alternative way of questioning nature. The

chapter that follows will then go on to explore how we can question and protect the unfolding of nature.

Chapter Three: Heidegger's Nature

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how the way Heidegger questions Being could be used to think about the role that the concept of nature plays in green thinking. The idea of nature in green thought is puzzling because, as demonstrated in Chapter One, it seems to help green thinkers to articulate something important about their goals. However, its meaning is difficult to explain. Green thinkers often seem to assume that the concept of nature describes the spontaneous unfolding of nonhuman environments without explaining how we can talk about certain environments as being nonhuman when humans have shaped environments on Earth to a large extent. To start thinking about nature, the previous chapter turned to Heidegger's philosophy. The chapter focused on how Heidegger's questioning of Being can change the way in which we think about the truth of beings. For Heidegger, questioning the truth of a being is about questioning the opening that allows beings to appear to us as beings. This truth is not something that can be clearly articulated by formulating correct descriptions of beings but it is something that can never be fully grasped. A being will always appear to us as partly concealed because that which allows beings to appear as beings remains hidden from us. Heidegger thus argues that to question the truth of beings, we should allow beings to unconceal themselves to us in ways that we cannot fully understand.

The chapter then explored how Heidegger's philosophy leads to a different way of thinking about nature. Two concepts in Heidegger's work in particular provide clues for thinking about nature: *phusis* and the earth. *Phusis,* Heidegger maintains, is the Greek meaning of nature that we, pre-occupied with thinking of nature as a resource, as something that is to be managed and controlled, have forgotten. To understand how Heidegger thought about *phusis*, the chapter investigated popular green interpretations of *phusis*. Clues to thinking about

phusis were found in Heidegger's essay 'Question Concerning Technology' where he employs the Greek understanding of *phusis* to rethink nature (QCT: 10-11; FT 12). For the Greeks, explains Heidegger, *phusis* referred to those things that emerge into unconcealment on their own accord, to things that grow instead of being made by humans. The earth is also related to this happening of *phusis.* The earth is the concealment that always participates in the happening of truth. In the previous chapter, the earth was taken to refer to the growth and development of the earth that conceals and nourishes entities that grow out of the it, describing how the way in which natural beings unfold through *phusis* always remains partly concealed from us. These two concepts, *phusis* and the earth, guided us towards a different way of thinking about nature. Encountering things in their truth, as the beings that they are, requires allowing natural beings to unfold in their own distinct ways, to understand that humans cannot fully control the manner in which these natural entities grow out of the concealing earth. Nature is no longer something that should be controlled and regulated, but it is now something that humans cannot fully comprehend.

However, as the chapter investigated the implications of this way of thinking about nature, it also identified some problems with the green way of understanding *phusis* and the earth. If nature refers to a distinct set of beings, to those that rise out of unconcealment on their own accord, then the question of protecting nature becomes a question of how we might protect natural beings so that they can continue to unfold in their own distinct ways. But Heidegger's insistence that we should allow beings to reveal their truth to us does not sit easily with attempting to find ways of ensuring the survival of a particular set of beings. This kind of questioning is reliant on forming correct statements about the impact that human action has for the survival of these beings, it requires asking what kinds of ways of interacting with our environments allow natural beings to thrive, and what kinds of actions exploit them. This means that there is something problematic in the way that Heidegger's work was interpreted

in the previous chapter. So while the chapter took important first steps in thinking about Heidegger's work, the problems that the chapter encountered suggest that the way in which it approached these topics was incomplete.

The purpose of this chapter is to formulate an alternative way of thinking about nature in Heidegger's work, and to revise the conclusions reached in the last chapter. It concentrates on rethinking the meaning of *phusis* and the earth in Heidegger's work by investigating the pre-Socratic understanding of *phusis*. This rethinking allows us to revisit the themes in Heidegger's work that were already discussed in the last chapter. The chapter will also look closely at Heidegger's conception of truth, what it means for beings to reveal their truth to us, why beings are always partly concealed by the earth and how we can learn to dwell on the earth and under the sky.

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first section looks at the role that language plays in Heidegger's work, and why this kind of thinking about nature can shed some light into the role of nature in green thinking. The next section investigates the concept of *phusis* closely, and demonstrates how *phusis* is a more complex concept than was recognised in the previous chapter. The third section will then move on to think about the concealing earth, about how the earth participates in the unfolding of *phusis* and what the earth can tell us about *phusis*. The fourth section will then examine how this rethinking of *phusis* and the earth changes the way in which we think about protecting nature and about learning to dwell on the earth. The chapter concludes by looking at the important role that place plays in Heidegger's thinking and how this emphasis on place can, in part, explain why Heidegger makes so many references to things conventionally understood as a part of a nonhuman nature when discussing dwelling.

Language

Before going on to rethink the meaning of the concept of nature, I want to pause here for a moment and think about why this kind of exercise might be useful for thinking about green politics. Is there not a danger that, as we focus on what Heidegger had to say about nature and begin to think about nature as something other than the spontaneously unfolding nonhuman environment, we are no longer talking about the meaning that nature has for green thinkers but begin to talk about something else? We can answer this question by examining in more detail the role that language plays in Heidegger's work.

As already explored in the introduction, Heidegger adopts a non-instrumental view of language. He distinguishes words from mere terms that 'are like buckets or kegs out which we can scoop sense', that we can define in dictionaries, and that become meaningful to us as we consult these dictionaries (WCT: 129; WHD: 88). Words and language are important for Heidegger because it is only when we can speak about beings that they appear to us as beings. Language, then, plays a part in the unconcealment of beings. Any kind of saying, Heidegger argues, is a showing that allows beings to appear as beings: 'Saying pervades and structures the openness of that clearing which every appearance must seek out and every disappearance must leave behind, and in which every present or absent being must show, say, announce itself' (WL: 126; WS: 246). And this is why humans themselves can never be in charge of language. Because the concealing earth always participates in the happening of truth, we can never fully know and grasp beings, and we can never express what these beings are through language: '[L]anguage is always ahead of us. Our speaking merely follows language constantly. Thus we are continually lagging behind what we first ought to have overtaken and taken up in order to speak about it' (NL: 75; WS: 168-9). So we cannot use language as an instrument, and we cannot use it to arrive at exact representations and definitions of things. Instead of using language to explain what we are attempting to say, we

should listen to language and allow language to reveal its meanings to us, accepting that we can never explicitly say what a word means. We can never fully articulate the meanings that things have for us, and instead of trying to explain them, we must ponder about the mystery of language, allowing words to speak to us. Speaking is not about explaining and describing what we see before us, but speaking is always a listening:

> Speaking is listening to the language that we speak. Thus, it is a listening not *while* but *before* we are speaking. This listening to language also comes before all other kinds of listening that we know, in a most inconspicuous manner. We do not merely speak *the* language – we speak *by way of* it (WL: 124; WZS: 243, emphasis original).

When we listen to language in this way, we allow language speak to us. Thus, instead of thinking of words as kegs or buckets from which we can scoop content from, Heidegger likens words to wellsprings, 'that are found and dug up in the telling, wellsprings that must be found and dug up again and again' (WCT: 130; WHD: 89). Thus, he explains that 'whenever we are listening to something, we are *letting something be said to us*' (WL: 124; WS: 243, emphasis original).

We can now understand why listening to this word 'nature' might be useful, and might be able to tell us something about nature in green thinking. This kind of questioning is an attempt to go beyond those meanings that the word has for us that we can explicitly articulate and explain. Indeed, Heidegger explicitly states that the pre-Socratic meaning of *phusis* is important because the way in which we understand nature today is an echo of *phusis*, and it is this pre-Socratic nature that we are trying to get at when we are talking about nature. This is what he has to say:

> And a much weaker, much harder-to-hear echo of the original *phusis* that was projected as the being of beings, is still left for us when we speak of the "nature" of things, the nature of the "state," and the "nature" of the human being by which we do not mean the natural "foundations" (thought of as physical, chemical, or biological) but rather the pure and simple being and essence of those beings (EP: 229; WP: 370).

Listening to the word 'nature', then, can be useful because it can allow for new ways of approaching this word, for listening to ways of thinking about nature that might play a role in how we use the word but that we have nevertheless forgotten.

Heidegger on Phusis and Nature

I will begin the task of listening to the word 'nature' by taking a closer look at how Heidegger understood *phusis,* the Greek word for nature, and by looking at how the meaning of Heidegger's *phusis* is not as clear is seemed to be at first. Although Heidegger seems to provide a clear definition of *phusis* in 'Question Concerning Technology', this is not the only definition of *phusis* that he gives. Haar (1993: 11) explains that Heidegger, in fact, provided three different definitions of *phusis.* In 'Question Concerning Technology' (10; FT: 12) Heidegger maintains that *phusis* refers to a set of entities that rise out of unconcealment on their own accord. It describes, for example, a flower that bursts into bloom. However, in *Introduction to Metaphysics* he maintains that *phusis* is Being itself (IM: 138; EM: 100). And in 'Origins of the Work of Art', Heidegger maintains that *phusis* is the concealing earth that participates in the happening of truth (OWA: 41; UK: 28). It is difficult to see how these different definitions describe the same *phusis*, and it thus seems that understanding Heidegger's conception of *phusis* is not as straightforward as it seemed to be in the previous chapter. To start investigating what Heidegger means when he talks about *phusis,* I will first take a closer look at the relationship between his and the Greek understandings of *phusis.* I will do this by looking at Heidegger's essay 'On the Essence and Concept of *Phusis* in Aristotle's Physics B, 1', where he provides a detailed discussion of Aristotle's conception of *phusis*. Here Heidegger discusses in more detail why it is important to question the pre-Socratic notion of nature, and to what extent Aristotle's understanding of *phusis* can help in this task.

Heidegger begins this essay by explaining how his questioning of *phusis* takes place in a wider context of attempting to understand the meaning that nature has for us. Although nature is now commonly understood as a resource to be controlled and calculated, the meaning of nature continues to puzzle Heidegger. This is because nature seems to have other meanings to us. Nature is often used to talk about how things are, and it is understood as something that grounds our existence. Christian thinkers, for example, talk about the natural state of humans, the way that humans existed in the time of creation, and more secular thinkers talk about nature as the natural drives and passions of humans (EP: 183-5; WP: 309-11). Heidegger then proceeds to investigate Aristotle's understanding of *phusis* in order to find out what this thing we call 'nature', which we seem to think of as something that grounds our existence, is.

Heidegger explains how Aristotle understood *phusis* as referring to a particular set of entities, to those entities which rise into unconcealment on their own accord. *Phusis*, for example, allows the flower to grow into a flower from the earth (EP: 191; WP: 320). Thus, Heidegger explains that, for Aristotle, *phusis* refers to one of the ways in which beings can be in this world: some beings are made by humans, the reason for why they appear in the world is found from the maker of that being, whereas other beings are in the world because they emerge into the world on their own accord. Nature, in Aristotle's account, can be understood as grounding human existence in the sense that it allows those growing things that nourish humans to emerge into unconcealment in ways humans cannot control (Holland, 1999: 415).

So far, it seems that Heidegger understood *phusis* as describing how a particular set of natural beings unfold without human involvement. But this is not the whole story regarding what Heidegger says about Aristotle's *phusis*. He concludes the essay by explaining that although we can use Aristotle's conception of *phusis* to start thinking about what *phusis* might mean, Aristotle's *phusis* is unable to completely explain what this thing we call 'nature', which grounds our existence, is. This is because Aristotle understands *phusis* as

referring to a distinct set of beings, to those beings that emerge from unconcealment on their own accord. Because of this, it fails to explain the sense in which nature can ground our existence as a whole. So, although Aristotle's understanding of *phusis* can guide us towards thinking about nature, Heidegger nevertheless ends up rejecting Aristotle's *phusis.* This becomes evident at the end of this essay where he explains that Aristotle's *phusis* is, in fact, the last echo of the Greek way of understanding nature that manifests itself in its most original form in pre-Socratic thinking:

> But Aristotle is far from intending to say that the essence of being in general is, properly speaking, of the same kind as the *phusis* which, a little later, he explicitly characterizes as only one branch of being among others. Rather, […] [Aristotle's conception of phusis] is an echo of the great beginning of Greek philosophy, the first beginning of Western philosophy. In this beginning, Being was thought as *phusis*, such that the *phusis* that Aristotle conceptualized can be only a late derivative of originary *phusis* (EP: 229; WP: 369-70).

Heidegger argues that Aristotle's *phusis*, that only describes the unfolding of particular kinds of entities, set the stage for understanding nature as something non-human, and eventually evolved into the Western conception of nature as something that can be researched and used as a resource (EP: 229; WP: 269). So this means that *phusis*, for Heidegger, cannot refer to a distinct set of natural beings which grow and unfold on their own accord.

Indeed, elsewhere Heidegger states explicitly that we cannot think of *phusis* in terms of the biological growth and development of beings. In an essay on the Anaximander fragment, he explains that we cannot think of the phenomenon of beings emerging into the world in a biological sense, as a process of something growing and developing into a being (AF: 30; SA: 342). Similarly, in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger explains that *phusis* can be experienced in those things that we usually understand as natural, but it is not limited to these processes. He explains:

> Phusis as emergence can be experienced everywhere: for example, in celestial processes (the rising of the sun), in the surging of the sea, in the growth of plants, in the coming forth of animals and human beings from the womb. But phusis, the emerging sway, is not synonymous with these processes, which we still

> today count as part of "nature". This emerging and standing-out-in-itself-from- itself may not be taken as just one process among others that we observe in beings. Phusis is Being itself, by virtue of which beings first become and remain observable (IM: 15; EM: 12-13).

Phusis, here, is not limited to describing the appearing of natural entities which rise into unconcealment on their own accord. Instead, *phusis* now describes the unconcealment of all entities; it is what allows beings to appear as beings, what allows us to encounter beings in their truth. We can find it not only from those things we conventionally think of as natural, but also from the spheres of history and customs. And, in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger maintains that the Greeks did not primarily experience *phusis* in natural processes but they first experienced *phusis* through poetry that reveals beings to us in their truth. Only after Being had been disclosed through poetry could the Greeks come to see how *phusis* is also present in "natural" processes (IM: 15-6; EM: 11).

These examinations of Heidegger's understanding of *phusis* help us make sense of one of the ways in which Heidegger talked about *phusis,* of how he talked about *phusis* in 'Question Concerning Technology', and to put this into context. In 'Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger does not provide an extensive discussion of *phusis,* and he only uses three sentences to describe how *phusis* is that which allows certain beings to grow and develop on their own accord. This is because the purpose of this discussion is to prepare a way of thinking about how the Greeks thought about unconcealment, not to provide a detailed discussion of how to think about *phusis*. This suggests that what Heidegger says about *phusis* in 'Question Concerning Technology' does not contradict what he said about Aristotle's *phusis* being only an echo of the pre-Socratic understanding of *phusis* in his other works. It now seems that in 'Question Concerning Technology' Heidegger is only talking about the way in which Aristotle understood *phusis,* he is using Aristotle's *phusis* as guidance for

thinking about *phusis* and this is not the final word on how it should be thought of. So how, then, should we proceed in thinking about *phusis*?

In the essay on Aristotle's conception of *phusis,* Heidegger states that for the pre-Socratics, nature signified 'the pure and simple Being and essence of […] beings' (EP; 229; WP: 270). Here Heidegger begins to talk about *phusis* in the second sense identified by Haar; he is referring to *phusis* as Being itself, as something that is related to how all beings emerge into unconcealment. But what this statement about *phusis* referring to the Being and essence of beings means is still unclear. Heidegger elaborates on this pre-Socratic understanding of *phusis* in the essay on the Anaximander fragment where he discusses what it meant for the pre-Socratics for something to be unconcealed to us, to emerge into the world as a being through the unfolding of *phusis*. Instead of thinking of this process in terms of the biological growth of beings, Heidegger wants to think of this emerging into the world as 'ways of luminous rising and wasting away' (AF: 30: SA: 342). So what does this mean and how is it different from the biological growth of beings? As was explained in the last chapter, Heidegger's references to visibility and lighting are related to allowing beings to appear to us as beings, related to that which allows us to grasp beings as beings. So luminous rising does not refer to biological processes because it has to do with how beings appear as beings to humans. Heidegger elaborates on this in an important, but puzzling, passage where he explains that rising into unconcealment is 'the gathering which clears and shelters, which in turn is thought and designated as the *logos*. The *logos* is experienced through *aletheia,* the sheltering which reveals thing' (AF: 39; SA: 352). So what does this passage tell us about *phusis*?

Heidegger talks in more detail about the meanings of *logos* and *aletheia* in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. He explains how the Greek word *logos* has many different meanings, but it most commonly refers to speech, word or reasoning. However, he argues that all these

translations miss what *logos* meant for the pre-Socratic thinkers, and explains that *logos* is, in fact, another word for *phusis*. Heidegger elaborates on this by looking at the meaning that *logos* had for Heraclitus. Heraclitus' *logos* meant gathering: '*[l]ogos* is constant gathering, the gatheredness of beings that stands in itself, that is, Being' (IM: 138; EM: 100). The German word for constant is 'ständig', which also means something permanent, something established, and it has a relation to the verb 'stehen', which means to stand. *Logos,* then, refers to establishing beings, allowing them to occupy a place in the world. Through *logos,* beings are able to take a stand in the world, and they can appear as beings (Dahlstrom, 2001b: 91). So *phusis* does not describe the growth and development of natural beings, but it describes how beings appear to humans as beings in the world.

So *phusis* and *logos* describe how beings emerge into unconcealment, become beings. This cannot be thought of in terms of physical growth of natural beings into beings. Instead, this happens when a clearing appears that lights up beings. *Phusis,* as Heidegger puts it in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, describes 'the overwhelming coming-to-presence that has not yet been surmounted in thinking, and within which that which comes to presence essentially unfolds as beings' (IM: 64; EM: 47). Before this happening of *phusis,* beings do not exist, there are no beings that we can think or talk about. As Schoenbohm (2001: 151) illustrates, Heidegger's *phusis* 'originally names […] not-yet-anything, so that "it" (which is not yet even an "it") becomes something, becomes determinate'. Nature, then, is the clearing, the lighting that allows beings to appear to us as beings (Ward, 1995: 231-233). *Phusis* does not only describe how certain kinds of entities rise into unconcealment, but it now becomes one of the central concepts of Heidegger's work: it describes one aspect of the unfolding of Being, it describes beings rising into presence as beings.

Looking at Heidegger's discussion of *logos* explains how *phusis* lights up beings, allowing them to appear through gathering and sheltering. But what about the second part of

the passage concerning the pre-Socratic meaning of *phusis* in Heidegger's essay on the Anaximander fragment where he explains that *logos* is experienced through *aletheia* that shelters and reveals? *Aletheia* was the Greek word for unconcealment and for truth. So here, Heidegger is equating the happening of *phusis* with the happening of truth. This means that, for Heidegger, we allow beings to be revealed to us in their truth when beings are made visible. This is why he, in the essay on Aristotle's *phusis* argued that for the pre-Socratics, *phusis* meant the Being and essence of beings. *Phusis* allows us to grasp beings in their truth; it allows us to grasp their essences.

But equating the unfolding of *phusis* with the happening of truth and with the essences of beings may, at first, seem puzzling. Why would Heidegger claim that through the unfolding of *phusis* and *logos* we encounter beings as the beings that they are, in their truth? Is it not, rather, the opposite, that *phusis* only allows us to encounter beings as they appear to us, and never as they really are? If *phusis* describes how beings appear to us as beings, is it not the case that we can never grasp what these beings really are, but we can only grasp them as they seem to be for us? To understand how the happening of truth and the unfolding of *phusis* are linked, I am going to look at how Heidegger understood these essences of beings, and how *aletheia* and *phusis* are both linked to his thinking of essences.

In *Contributions to Philosophy* Heidegger calls the process whereby things appear to us beings as the swaying of Being. The meaning of 'swaying' may seem unclear at first, but turning to the original German text helps make sense of it. The German word that Heidegger uses is 'wesen' which means 'to last', 'to endure', 'to sway'. The connotations 'wesen' has in German are, however, more complex than revealed by a dictionary translation. Importantly, there is a noun 'Wesen' in German, which means 'essence'. Heidegger is here playing with the different meanings of 'wesen' and 'Wesen'. The verb 'wesen', in the way that Heidegger uses it, refers to a kind of enduring that grants a being its essence, allows a being to endure as

a being. The swaying of Being, then, is what allows beings to endure in their essence that has been granted to them by Being. So essences, for Heidegger, do not pre-exist human interpretative activity, but they are something that are created by *phusis* as *phusis* allows beings to rise into presence as beings. Or as Ben-Dor (2003: 73) explains, essences are the unfolding of Being in beings. For Heidegger, beings have no essence in themselves prior to them appearing in the clearing and prior to them rising into presence as beings. This is why the happening of *phusis* can be equated with the happening of truth.

Let us now return to the example of the apple that has been used in the thesis as a way of illustrating how Heidegger's philosophy can change the way in which we approach the question of nature. How can we now think of *phusis* as something which allows for the appearance of apples in my grandparents' garden? We can no longer think of *phusis* as describing how the apple grows into an apple on its own accord. Instead, *phusis* now refers to the phenomenon of the apple appearing to us as a being. It is only through the happening of *phusis* that apples can appear to me in the garden as beings, as something that I can engage with. And similarly, it is because of the happening of *phusis* that anything can appear to me in the garden as a being or that the garden can appear as a being. *Phusis* does not unconceal the apple because it allows the apple to grow into an apple but because it allows the apple to appear to us as a being. *Phusis* shelters beings by allowing them to appear to us as beings, and allows beings to appear to us in their truth, as the beings that they are. This also means that there is no one true essence of the fruit apple that exists irrespective of time and place. The essence is given to the apple by *phusis* that allows the apple to appear, and *phusis* always unfolds in different ways. Letting the apple reveal its truths to us, then, is not about allowing the apple to reveal some truth that exists in the apple before it is unconcealed as a being by *phusis*.

This way of thinking about *phusis* may seem somewhat unsatisfying. The green Heideggerians were able to clearly articulate the meaning of *phusis* and talk about it in concrete terms whereas here *phusis* has been described in quite vague terms: *phusis* is merely described as beings rising into presence as beings. This way of talking about *phusis* lacks an explanation of what it is that allows for the appearance of beings, the unfolding of *phusis* is partly concealed from us. This is something that I warned about already at the beginning of the thesis. My way of inquiring about nature will not provide an answer to the question of what nature is, but it will point us towards a path of questioning nature. As the thesis progresses, I will illustrate more closely how Heidegger goes about questioning and thinking about Being, and it will hopefully become clearer how we could find our own paths of questioning Being.

Talking about this concealment brings us to the third aspect of *phusis* that was identified by Haar: *phusis* as the concealing earth. This concealing earth is something that was already discussed in the last chapter. Here the concealing earth was equated with growth and flourishing of our environments. It is now time to revisit this understanding of the earth. In the next section, I will take a closer look at this concealing earth, and investigate whether we really can equate the earth with the growth of our environments, or if our new understanding of *phusis* means that we now have to start thinking of the earth in a different manner. I will then explore how Heidegger's conception of the earth is linked to dwelling and how we can learn to question Being by dwelling on the earth.

Heidegger and the Earth

In this section, I will re-examine the role that the earth plays in Heidegger's writings. Heidegger never explicitly states what meaning the earth holds for him. Adding to the

difficulties posed by the ambiguities in the way that Heidegger talks about the earth, the way in which he uses the word changes throughout his works. As was explored in the previous chapter, Heidegger initially talks about the earth as something that strives with the world, but towards the end of his work, the earth becomes a part of the world in which humans learn to dwell, and the unfolding of this earth is also paired with the sky. To make sense of these different ways of talking about the earth, I will begin by looking at how Heidegger talks about the earth in his mid-work where, as discussed in the previous chapter, he describes the work of art as a strife between the earth and the world. I will then move on to look at the role that the earth plays in Heidegger's description of dwelling in the fourfold of the earth, the sky, the gods and the mortals.

The previous chapter interpreted the earth as describing the unfolding of earth from which beings grow and develop. It relied heavily on Heidegger's example of the temple as a work of art that reveals its surroundings, the rocky ground on which the temple rests, the storms that rage above, trees, grass and the surrounding animals as beings. But as I thought more closely about this role of the earth in Heidegger's thought, I realised that if I revised my understanding of *phusis,* I would also have to rethink my interpretation of Heidegger's earth. This is because understanding the earth as that which allows for the biological growth of beings contradicts understanding *phusis* as something that allows beings to emerge into unconcealment as they are granted their essences by Being. If the earth were understood as that which nourishes and conceals nonhuman natural beings, then the source of concealment in the world would be the fact that we cannot fully explain and comprehend material beings. If this were what Heidegger was attempting to get at when describing the concealment of the earth, then material beings would have to have some meaning prior to us encountering them, they would have to hold in themselves some meaning that can only be revealed to humans in part, some essence that exists prior to humans engaging with these beings. This contradicts

Heidegger's way of thinking about *phusis* and his view of essences as something that only come about in the clearing, as something given to beings by Being itself only when beings appear as beings through the happening of *phusis*.

I am going to illustrate this by, again, taking the apple as an example. If the earth that conceals the apple did refer to the biological unfolding of the earth from which the apple grows, then an apple would hold a particular meaning to me because of the way it has been nourished by the earth. If I understood the meaning of the earth in this way, I could think of the event of me eating the apple as the moment the apple reveals the meanings given to it by the earth from which it has emerged, and by the sky under which it has grown. So, if I ate an apple that has been grown in Finland, the apple would reveal to me a particularly sour taste, typical of apples grown in colder climates. But this account of the apple revealing its meanings ignores how the sour taste is without meaning before human interpretative activity. The apple may taste sour, but to understand what that sour taste means to us, the apple must present itself in the clearing. Only this will give the sour taste of the apple some kind of significance, maybe bringing back memories of other occasions where we have encountered this taste. So that which allows the apple to appear to us as a being cannot be understood as the ground that nourishes the apple and allows for its biological growth. The earth, then, in Heidegger's work, must have another kind of meaning. I am going to begin looking at what the earth might refer to by revisiting Heidegger's understanding of the earth in 'Origins of the Work of Art'. Reinterpreting the meaning of the earth in 'Origins of the Work of Art' helps us rethink how concealment participates in the unfolding of *phusis,* and it will also, in the end, guide us towards a different way of thinking about the roles of the sky and the earth in dwelling in the fourfold.

Iain Thomson (2011) presents another way of interpreting the earth in 'Origins of the Work of Art', one that does not think of the earth as the spontaneous growth of nonhuman, natural

beings. In the previous chapter, I looked at how green Heideggerian thinkers often draw on Heidegger's account of the happening of truth in the Greek temple in order to explain how the earth refers to the ground the nourishes natural beings around the temple and allows for their growth and development. However, Thomson argues that the temple is supposed to only serve as an introductory, motivating example of how the work of art can create a world of shared meanings around it (Thomson, 2011: 67). To really grasp how the earth strives with the world, we must look at Heidegger's account of Van Gogh's painting of a pair of shoes. This painting is of a pair of dirty shoes which Heidegger assumes belong to a peasant woman. The painting is important for Heidegger because he maintains that it allows us to start thinking about the daily activities of the peasant and about how the strife between the earth and the world manifests itself. Heidegger explains that the painting helps us think about how '[i]n the stiffy rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind' (OWA: 33; UK: 19).

It would be easy to think that the concealing earth in this painting could be found from the soil on which the peasant woman dwells during her daily activities. But Thomson wants to start thinking about the role of the earth in the painting differently. Thomson (2011: 85) explains that when Heidegger looks to Van Gogh's painting in order to describe the strife between the earth and the world, Heidegger emphasises that '[t]here is nothing surrounding this pair of farmer's shoes in or to which they might belong – only an undefined space' (OWA: 33; UK: 18-9). So here Thomson draws our attention to the fact that Heidegger claims that these shoes are not surrounded by the muddy earth on which the woman dwells, but instead, they are surrounded by nothing. Thomson also explains that in *Introduction to Metaphysics* (37-8; EM: 27), Heidegger goes further and maintains that the painting does not even represent shoes but it represent nothing. So if the shoes in the painting are surrounded

by nothing, and if the painting itself represents nothing, then to understand this painting, to grasp what the painting is telling us about the farmer's shoes and about the earth, we need to pay attention to this nothing.

But how can we start paying attention to nothing? For Heidegger, the nothing is not just mere nothing, but it plays an important role in his philosophy. This nothing describes that which is not yet a being but from which beings nevertheless emerge as beings. The significance of the nothing was already briefly mentioned in the last chapter. When introducing Heidegger's thought, I explained how, in the context of asking about an apple tree, Heidegger was interested in asking how it is that 'the tree is, it is not so that the tree is not' (WCT: 173; WHD: 106). At that point, asking about why the tree is not may have sounded confusing, but we are now ready to explore this statement further. Asking about how the tree is not is a significant question because it asks the question of the nothing.

We cannot articulate the meaning of this nothing. If we were able to explain the meaning of nothing, then we would again be thinking of this nothing as something, as an object that we can understand. Therefore, to think about nothing means to think in a way that is different from how thinking is understood traditionally: 'we cannot *begin* to think about Being and Nothingness by thinking about them directly (or finally, "about" them at all)' (Rosen, 1978: 131, emphasis original). Heidegger explores this question of the nothing in detail in an essay called 'What is Metaphysics?'. Here Heidegger explains that the nothing is encountered when we experience anxiety. Anxiety, as Heidegger already illustrated in *Being and Time*, is different from fear. When we are fearful, we are always afraid of something, but anxiety has no object. We cannot explain what we are feeling when we are feeling anxious, we cannot explain what we are anxious about. It is this experience of anxiety that Heidegger maintains reveals the nothing:

> All things and we ourselves sink into indifference. This, however, not in the sense of mere disappearance. Rather, in their very receding, things turn toward us. This receding of beings as a whole, closing in on us in anxiety, oppresses us. We can get no hold on things. In the slipping away of beings only this "no hold on things" comes over us and remains (WM: 88; WIM: 13).

When we are anxious, the world as a whole slips away from us. Those things which we usually engage with begin to slip away from us, we no longer feel at home in the world. And Thomson explains the Van Gogh's painting, by being a painting of nothing, is in fact a painting of how beings can appear to us as beings from nothing.

So how is Van Gogh's painting a painting about beings appearing to us as beings? To explain, Thomson (2011: 87) draws attention to background in this painting and points out that when we concentrate on this background, we can see shapes emerging from it which we cannot quite make sense of. So, Thomson (2011: 89) explains that what might at first seem as just nothing, just the background of the painting, 'continues to tantalizingly offer itself to our understanding while also receding from our attempts to order what it offers us into any firm, settled meaning.' If we concentrate on the brush strokes that make up the background of the painting, we can recognise a figure of the peasant on the field emerging from the background. When we begin to pay closer attention to the painting 'we notice and carefully attend to the way these shoes take shape on and against an inconspicuously dynamic background […], a background that turns out not to be nothing at all but, rather, to both support and overflow the world that emerges from it' (Thomson, 2011: 98). And the nothing that conceals itself is the earth itself. Thomson (2011: 93) thus argues that what Heidegger's painting reveals to us, is that

> [O]ur intelligible worlds are shaped by what we take from and make of a dynamic phenomenological abundance that we can never fully grasp or finally master. By partly informing and yet always also partly eluding our attempts to order those elements the earth offers to our understanding into a single, final historical "world", the abundant earth preserves itself for future orderings, for worlds still yet to be disclosed.

So here, the concealing earth can be observed in the shoes themselves, not only in the mud surrounding them. The earth describes the material qualities of all beings, and it describes

how we can never fully make sense of these qualities. Thomson thus explains that '"Earth", in other words, is an inherently dynamic dimension of intelligibility that simultaneously offers itself to and resists being brought fully into the light of our "worlds" of meaning and permanently stabilized therein, despite our best efforts' (Thomson, 2011: 89).

Thomson's account of the earth is now different from the environmentalist accounts explored earlier. Thomson's focus on what Heidegger says about Van Gogh's shoes allows him to move away from thinking of the earth as the ground from which things grow and develop, and allows him to think about it differently. The earth does not refer to natural beings which grow out of the earth on their own accord, but it now refers to the materiality of all beings. Beings always remain partly in concealment because we can never fully make sense of all of their material qualities. Being itself remains in concealment because we cannot fully comprehend how these material qualities allow beings to appear to us as beings.

But although Thomson presents a different interpretation of the concealing earth, his interpretation of the earth does not yet fully overcome the problems in the environmentalist accounts of the earth discussed earlier. For Thomson, the earth as the nothing refers to matter that has not yet appeared to us as a being. The concealing earth strives with the world as it 'offers previously unglimpsed aspects of itself to our understanding and yet also withdraws from our attempts to order those aspects into a single, fixed meaning' (Thomson, 2011: 93) But if the earth refers to the materiality of beings, and if this material unfolding of the earth participates in the way we make sense of the world, then we are still able to form correct propositions about the unfolding of the earth, and use these correct propositions to allow for the happening of truth. So, for example, the measured weight of the apple would tell us something about the apple itself because it would play a part in allowing the apple to appear to us as an apple.

But Thomson's account is nevertheless useful because it allows for divorcing Heidegger's earth from that which allows for the biological development of a set of supposedly natural beings, and it brings us to another possible way of thinking about the earth. If the earth does not describe the ground from which things grow out of and develop, then it does not have to refer to the material qualities of beings at all. So how, then, should we start thinking about the concealing earth? Dreyfus suggests thinking of the earth as referring to how the background practices, which allow beings to be revealed to us as beings, always remain partly in concealment. He explains how the artwork, understood as a paradigm that helps us make sense of the world, is always partly concealed from us:

> [T]he artwork […] resists rationalization. Any paradigm could be paraphrased and rationalized only if the concrete thing, which served as an exemplar, symbolized or represented an underlying system of beliefs or values that could be abstracted from the particular exemplar. But the whole of needing an exemplar is that there is no such system, there are only shared practices. Therefore the style resists rationalization and can only be displayed (Dreyfus, 2008: 411).

Dreyfus' interpretation of the earth equates the earth with our implicit background practices which allow us to make sense of things. This interpretation stems from Dreyfus' reading of Heidegger that was examined in the previous chapter. Dreyfus' understanding of Being was found lacking because it did not address the question of what allows for the emergence of background practices in the first place. A similar criticism can be made of Dreyfus' interpretation of the earth: this interpretation talks about implicit background practices without asking what gave rise to them. But Dreyfus' interpretation of the earth can still aid us in making sense of this concept. Instead of thinking about the earth as our implicit background practices that allow us to make sense of things, we could start thinking about the earth as that which allows for these background practices in the first place. The earth, then, should be thought of as describing the heritage into which we are thrown that allows for the

emergence of the world and for the appearance of beings. We can, thus, start thinking of the earth independently of the material existence of beings.

But as was the case with *phusis,* there can never be an answer to the question of what the earth really is. If it were easy to name the earth, to explain how things emerge from the earth as beings, then Heidegger would not have had to resort to such obscure language in order to start thinking about the earth. The earth, as the concealment that strives with the world, is self-secluding, it hides itself and this means that we cannot explain or understand it. There can, then, only be avenues for thinking about and questioning the earth, and no final answers to the question of what the earth is.

This new way of approaching the nothing and the earth now allows for a new way of thinking about the strife between the earth and the world. The basic idea of this interpretation is the same as that of the interpretation offered by the greens: the concealing earth striving with the world means that beings, that appear to us in the world, are always partly concealed from us, that we can never quite grasp what beings are, what allowed them to appear to us as beings. But the explanation for why things are concealed is now different. Things are not concealed because their material qualities remain partly hidden from us but because Being is concealed from us, because Being, as that which allows beings to appear to us as beings, hides itself from us.

So what kinds of criticisms have been levelled against the idea of divorcing the earth from the concealed material growth and development of beings, and how could we respond to them? Thomson wanted to avoid interpreting this manner because he worries that divorcing the notion of the earth from the materiality of beings means that truth 'would just be a frictionless subjective projection of hallucination' rather than being able to find 'a genuinely creative way to be grounded in and genuinely responsive to the ways things show

themselves' (Thomson, 2011: 102; see also Zimmerman, 1990: 226). But the interpretation of the nothing presented in this chapter is not a subjective hallucination. A singular human is not free to create beings according to his/her will, and cannot control how beings emerge as beings. *Phusis* always unfolds and beings appear in a world into which we are thrown, not in a world we create.

Polt (2011: 37-8) presents another possible objection to this argument and maintains that the concealment of entities must refer to their material qualities that have yet to be discovered because the way in which these material qualities are revealed to us influences the way we make sense of the world. So for example, apples would not appear to us as something that can be eaten if it they were poisonous. But by saying that the earth does not refer to the material growth and development of beings, I am not suggesting that the way in which we make sense of the world is not dependent on the existence of the material world. The existence of the material world is a precondition for our existence and sense-making. And the manner in which material entities grow and develop can, of course, have some impact on the way in which we make sense of the world. But the point is that how an entity appears to us as a being is not determined by these material properties. There is no meaning inherent in beings that would always show up in a particular way in different historical worlds.

For example, we can imagine a rural village that has a lot of apple trees. The apple trees have become an important part of the lives of the people living in the village: picking apples in the autumn gives the villagers a sense of rhythm and regularity, shared gatherings involving freshly baked apple pies also allow the apples to be thought of as something that bring people together. The material existence of these apples creates the pre-conditions for the apples to appear in this way. If the apple trees did not bear fruit annually or if the fruit from the trees were not edible, the apples would appear to us differently. But this does not mean that the appearance of the apples as apples was somehow determined by the materiality

of the apples. An apple as an edible, annual fruit can appear to us in many different ways. The fact that there are years when apple trees do not bear much fruit means that apples do not have to remind us of rhythm and regularity. Instead, the fact that apple trees bear different quantities of fruit each year could come to remind us of irregularity and precariousness. The fact that apples are edible does not mean that eating them has to be culturally acceptable: there could also be a taboo on eating apples in the village. Instead of apples being things that gather people together, they could come to signify something that we must stay away from.

Dwelling in the Fourfold

Re-thinking the meaning of Heidegger's *phusis* and the concealing earth also requires revisiting his account of what it means to dwell in the fourfold. As was already explored in the previous chapter, the way in which Heidegger talks about the worlded earth and the sky when discussing dwelling also seems to indicate that he is referring to the earth and the sky in a literal sense. In 'Building Dwelling Thinking' (BDT), Heidegger talks about the earth as 'spreading out in rock and water, rising up into plant and animal' (BDT: 147; BWD: 151) and in 'The Thing', he explains how the earth nourishes grapevines, allowing them to grow and bear fruit (Thing, 170; Ding 174). Similarly, in BWD Heidegger explains that the sky is the 'vaulting path of the sun, the course of the changing moon, the wandering glitter of the stars, the years seasons and their changes' (BDT: 147; BWD: 151). In 'The Thing' he also explains how the sky participates in the growing of the grapevine, in it 'the earth's nourishing and the sky's sun are betrothed to one another' (Thing, 170; Ding: 174). In all of these examples, Heidegger refers to the earth as that which provides the ground for the growth of plants and animals, and to the sky that allows for the growth of these beings through sunshine and rain.

These literal interpretations of the earth and the sky were employed in the last chapter to make sense of what it means to dwell and of how we can learn to question Being. The fourfold was understood as describing how the natural and the cultural always exist together in a unity as the mortals encounter the earth and the sky. According to this interpretation, an apple in my grandparents' garden would appear to me as a being because I encountered it in the intersection of nature and culture. The apple, as a natural being, emerged from the earth into the world on its own accord, but it was experienced as a being by the mortals who allowed for the appearance of the gods by adopting a questioning attitude towards the apple. Although the natural, the earth and the sky, and the cultural, the gods and the mortals, are always experienced together in things, we could, in this interpretation of the fourfold, nevertheless think of them as originating from two separate spheres that are united as we experience the world.

But having re-examined the role of the concealing earth in Heidegger's writings and having rethought the meaning of his questioning of Being, thinking about the four elements of the fourfold in the manner presented in last chapter becomes difficult. Because the concealing earth in 'Origins of the Work of Art' does not refer to the earth that allows for the biological growth of beings, neither can the earth and the sky of the fourfold be understood in these terms. Indeed, in other passages, where Heidegger describes dwelling in the fourfold, he seems to state that the earth and the sky must be understood as referring to something else. For example, in the 'The Thing' Heidegger describes the way that the fourfold gathers into things in the following way:

> Things, each thinging from time to time in its own way, are heron and roe, deer, horse and bull. Things, each thinging and each staying in its own way, are mirror and clasp, book and picture, crown and cross (Thing: 180; Ding: 184).

Heidegger begins the passage by listing things that we would conventionally consider as natural, but ends it by listing things that are made by humans. Thus, it becomes evident from

this passage that the fourfold can be gathered together in any kind of being, in something made by humans as well as in those things that are conventionally understood as natural. So what, then, could an alternative way of approaching the fourfold and dwelling look like?

Dreyfus and Spinosa (2003) provide one answer to this question by presenting a way of understanding the role of the sky and the earth in the fourfold that avoids thinking of the earth and the sky in terms of allowing for the biological unfolding beings. For Dreyfus and Spinosa, the earth is what participates in our sense-making. The earth refers to those 'taken-for-granted practices that ground situations and make them matter to us' (2003: 345). Dreyfus and Spinosa use the example of the family meal to illustrate this. In the context of a family meal, the earth refers to those practices that ground the nuclear family, such as shared family meals. Dreyfus and Spinosa also explain how we could think about the sky in the fourfold without referring to the literal sky, and how the sky also participates in our sense-making. The sky refers 'to the stable possibilities for action', to things that happen that we feel are appropriate to a given situation and that condition our understanding of beings. This sky also plays a role in making the family meal important to us and in allowing beings to unconceal themselves to us in a particular way during the family meal. For example, during a family dinner, the sky 'manifests itself in people reminiscing and asking warm questions, but arguments, private jokes and brooding silence is discouraged' (Dreyfus and Spinosa, 2003: 345).

The sky and the earth, then, signify our everyday practices that we cannot fully make explicit nor understand, but that nevertheless ground our existence and allow for the appearance of the world. The role of the gods and the mortals in Dreyfus and Spinosa's account remains similar to the roles that were identified in the previous chapter. The gods allow us to grasp beings in richer rather than in an ordinary way, and referring to humans as

mortals reminds us of our finite existence and of the finite knowledge that we have of the world (Dreyfus and Spinosa, 2003: 345).

Dreyfus and Spinosa's description of the fourfold, again, rests on thinking of Being as the implicit background practices that help us make sense of things without asking about that which grounds these practices in the first place. The earth and the sky are both thought of in terms of these background practices. But despite these problems, I think that Dreyfus and Spinosa's interpretation of the fourfold can, again, serve as an important starting point for thinking about the sky and the earth. This is because it guides us towards examining what allowed for the emergence of these implicit background practices and for the possibilities for acting in different ways in particular circumstances in the first place.

So what, then, do these elements of the fourfold refer to? The earth could now be thought of as that which allows for the emergence of our background practices and the sky as that which allows for the possibilities of action. Together they describe the mysterious opening of the historical world in which beings can rise into presence. But as Ingold (2008: 1802) explains, and as was already discussed in the previous chapter, it might be more helpful not to think of these elements of the fourfold as separate at all but rather as 'manifolds of movement that are directly implicated in one another'. Heidegger's poetic descriptions of the fourfold can help us get on the way of thinking about dwelling, provided that we do not get too caught up in trying to find exact definitions for the different elements of the fourfold. Instead of looking for definitions, we should listen to how Heidegger is attempting to describe the fourfold.

So this is how we should start questioning the happening of nature and the happening of *phusis.* The unfolding of *phusis* no longer describes the spontaneous growth unfolding of a certain set of natural beings but it now describes how all beings appear to us as beings in

ways that we cannot fully understand nor grasp. Caring for nature means to pay attention to this happening, staying with beings, learning to dwell without attempting to represent beings or explain what they mean for us. Learning to dwell allows us to live richer lives because we are no longer solely engaged with manipulating beings, oriented towards the future, filled with anxieties concerning how things may go wrong and how our plans might fail (King, 2009: 92). Learning to stay with beings allows us to let go of these plans and allows us to let go of the need to manipulate beings.

Homeland and Dwelling Ground

But what has not been fully explored here is why Heidegger uses these literal examples of *phusis,* the earth and the sky so often if *phusis* is not meant to describe the unfolding of a nonhuman nature. Why does he talk about the sky as the sun and the moon, why does he talk about the earth as that from which animals and plants grow if the sky and the earth are not meant to be understood in a literal sense? I will explore this question here by looking at the role that place plays in Heidegger's work and how the earth provides the ground for our dwelling.

Although in 'Origins of the Work of Art' Heidegger is mainly concerned with thinking about the earth as the concealment that strives with the world, here he also begins to elaborate on how we might think about the earth in terms of the ground on which we dwell as well. In 'Origins of the Work of Art', Heidegger talks about the earth as our dwelling ground in two different ways. In his first reference to the earth as a dwelling ground, Heidegger explains that with the happening of the strife between the earth and the world, the earth, as that which illuminates beings and allows them to appear as beings is 'that on which and in which man bases his dwelling' (OWA: 41; UK: 28). So here it seems that thinking of the earth as a

dwelling ground leads to a similar interpretation of the earth that was outlined earlier in this chapter. Heidegger is talking about the earth as something which grounds our existence because the earth is that which allows beings to appear to us as beings.

But on the same page, there is also a second sense in which Heidegger thinks of the earth as our dwelling ground. Here Heidegger goes on to describe how the Greek temple provides a dwelling ground for humans. As he begins to talk about this temple, he seems to be referring to the earth in a different sense. Heidegger explains how the Greek temple is an example of the kind of artwork which allows for the appearance of the world: it opens up the world by allowing for the strife between the earth and the world. He explains that when this happens, the earth becomes our dwelling ground: 'The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only this emerges as native ground' (OWA: 41; UK: 28). The earth no longer refers to that which allows for the appearance of the world, but it is meant in the sense of providing the ground for our dwelling, by providing our native ground.

So what is happening here? The German word 'grund', like the English 'ground', has two possible meanings: it can mean the reason for why we understand that things are in a certain way, and it can mean the physical ground on which we live. Heidegger seems to equate these two meanings: as the earth grounds our understanding of beings, it also provides the physical ground for our dwelling by providing us our native dwelling ground. So, the use of the word 'ground' here seems puzzling. As the earth grounds the way we understand the world, it also creates our physical dwelling ground, our native ground. The earth, as that which allows for the appearance of the world, then, seems to be somehow linked to the physical earth. In what follows, I shall explore this link by looking closer at the role that native ground plays in Heidegger's work, and at the importance of place in his work.

Heidegger does not explore the idea of the dwelling ground in more detail in 'Origins of the Work of Art', and does not explain why these two meanings of the word 'ground' are linked. To understand how the earth can also provide us the ground on which we dwell, I will next look at what Heidegger has to say about finding our native ground in two lecture courses that he delivered on Hölderlin's river poetry, *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'Rhine'* delivered in 1934/5 and *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* (Ister refers to the river Danube), delivered seven years later. Here Heidegger explores the question of the native ground by discussing how we can begin to journey towards our homeland. As Heidegger explores the importance and the significance of the rivers in Hölderlin's poetry in these lectures, he also elaborates on how the rivers are linked to our dwelling ground, both in the sense of the physical ground on which we dwell, and in the sense of allowing beings to appear to us as beings.

But before going on to look in more detail at Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's river poetry, I want to investigate more closely the roles that the native ground and the homeland play in his writings. It is important to note that these concepts are not meant to be thought of in a geographical sense. In *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'Rhine'*, Heidegger discusses how the homeland cannot be understood in a geographical sense, as space that has been set apart by clearly definable boundaries (GR: 104). Instead, the homeland is meant in terms of Being itself (GR: 100). In 'Letter on Humanism' Heidegger explains that he wants to think of native land 'in an essential sense, not patriotically or nationalistically, but in terms of the history of Being' (LH: 257; BH: 168). Looking at the German words Heidegger uses can help us better understand how he approaches this question of the homeland. As Haar (1993: 62) explains, the German word for native ground, 'Heimat', is closely associated with 'Heim', which means home and a place of habitation. The word 'Heim', again, is associated with adjectives 'heimisch', meaning familiar and 'heimlich', meaning secret and intimate. So the

homeland is not to be understood in geographical terms, but it is to be understood in terms of finding our dwelling ground, in terms of learning to dwell near Being.[2]

So how should we think about the homeland? How are secrecy and intimacy related, and how can they, together, describe the homeland? For us who have forgotten to ask the question of Being and are homeless, the homeland remains initially a secret. Thus, for Heidegger, the search for the homeland entails a journey into what is hidden and foreign to us. A similar kind of emphasis on encountering the foreign was already present in *Being and Time* when Heidegger describes anxiety: when we are feeling anxious, beings slip away from us and we no longer feel that we can engage with them, we feel like we are not at home in the world. But if we venture into the foreign and question Being, we can overcome these feelings, we can become homely and learn to exist in the nearness of Being. The homeland, thus, is understood in opposition to the alienating tendencies of modern technology where we no longer stay with things but attempt to control and master them (McNeill, 1999: 328). Finding our homeland, learning to dwell, means to exist in nearness of Being, in the intimacy of Being. The sense of secrecy, however, will never be completely erased and the homeland will always remain partly hidden to us. This is because the unfolding of Being is always partly concealed, we can never fully understand this homeland or represent it. If we are to find our homeland, we must allow the concealing earth to unfold in its concealment. Becoming homely is to exist near to things that we can never fully understand nor grasp.

So how can these readings of Hölderlin's poetry help us think about the homeland? These interpretations of Hölderlin's poetry were central to the development of Heidegger's later philosophy. Heidegger saw Hölderlin as a poet who was able to think about the truth of Being

[2] It is also important to question Heidegger's thinking on the homeland in relation to his engagements with National Socialism. Because this chapter is questioning the homeland in order to better understand the references that Heidegger makes to the sky and the earth, I will not discuss it here. This topic will, however, be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

in his poetry. He found Hölderlin's river poetry particularly important because these poems tell about how the German people can come to know their homeland, their native ground, and become homely. To grasp the significance of the homeland, examining *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'Rhine'* and *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* together is important because they present slightly different, but complementary, ways of understanding the homeland. In the lecture course on 'Germania' and 'Rhine', Heidegger aims to find a unified destiny for the German people, and he sees Hölderlin as a poet who can reveal the truth of Being to the German people through his poetry. It is here that Heidegger first begins to think about the idea of the homeland and about its relationship to dwelling and to the earth. Thus, this lecture course serves as an important starting point for thinking about how Heidegger approaches the idea of the homeland and its relationship to our dwelling ground. But as Young (2011: 76) demonstrates, when Heidegger delivered *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* his views on the native ground and homeland had developed. Heidegger now presents a different view of how we can find our homeland. The poet no longer founds the homeland, but he can help us find the mood that guides us towards questioning Being. Heidegger is now emphasising our own personal journeys towards our homeland. I will return to examine these differences in the next chapter. For now, I will concentrate on the significance of the rivers for Heidegger.

So how does Heidegger see the rivers in Hölderlin's river poetry, and how are they related to finding our dwelling ground and homeland? In the lecture course on 'Germania' and Rhine', he talks about the rivers and their relationship to the earth as follows:

> [T]he rivers are not simply 'pictures' for something, but are meant themselves, and with them the native earth. But the earth is not meant as a measured piece of land, water, plants, animals and the air of our planet, not meant as topics for natural sciences from geology to astrophysics, not meant at all as "nature" in the modern sense (GR: 195).

The way in which Heidegger talks about the earth here is puzzling. He maintains that the rivers are not symbols of something else but they are meant themselves, and with them the

earth that surrounds them. But he also claims that the earth is not meant in geographical terms, as pieces of land that that we can calculate and express in mathematical terms. Heidegger presents a similar kind of puzzling picture of the rivers in Hölderlin's poetry later when he returns to it in the lecture course on 'Ister'. In a passage describing the rivers, Heidegger writes that the rivers are not 'instances of nature, not pieces of the landscape. Neither are they "symbols" for the journey of humans on the earth' (IE: 35; IG: 39). The rivers, then, do not describe a landscape and rivers cannot be understood as a symbol for something else either.

But what are the rivers if they do not describe the landscape and if they are not symbols for something else? What is this homeland that the rivers help us attain? Heidegger goes on to explain that the rivers do not create the homeland because they provide a geographical location for human settlement. The river, he maintains, is not 'a stretch of water only passing through human settlement but its streaming, as that which develops the land, first creates the possibility of establishing the dwelling of humans' (GR: 264). The rivers do not create the place in which humans can learn to dwell because they create a particular kind of geographical environment for dwelling, because they provide a source of water for the human settlements. Instead, the rivers create the dwelling place for humans because they have appeared as rivers for us. The rivers have become places of dwelling because humans have settled near these rivers, engaged with them and experience them. This is why the rivers can guide humans towards their homeland. In *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister',* as in *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'Rhine'*, Heidegger also explains that the rivers cannot be understood as geographical entities because the rivers are something that only become rivers as we come to know our homeland. Heidegger explains that the river is 'that very locality that is attained in and through the journeying' (IE: 31; IG: 36). The river is both the locality, and the journeying to this locality, and it cannot be thought about without paying attention to both

this journeying and to the locality attained through this journeying. We find the locale in which we become homely, we find our homeland, when we embark on this journey of questioning, thinking about the journeying of the river, and about the different ways in which the river reveals itself to us.

These discussions now allow us to think about the references that Heidegger makes to earthly things. In the lecture course on 'Ister' he talks about the earth in the following way:

> Yet when Hölderlin says "earth", he is not at all referring to the "earthy realm" understood in a metaphysical or Christian way, a realm that, as a transitory, preliminary stage to the eternal remains precisely something to be surpassed, given up, and thereby "lost". The journeying that the river *is* prevails, and does so essentially, in its vocation of attaining the earth as the "ground" of the homely (IE: 30; IG: 35, emphasis original).

After all of his mystic references to the gods and to the mortals, Heidegger explains that to question Being, we do not have to experience anything otherworldly but Being itself is earthly. What he, then, communicates through these examples is that we question Being by engaging with the earthly beings amongst which we dwell and become homely, and not by attempting to attain something otherworldly. Heidegger here is concerned with the question of place, with the region 'in which we find ourselves gathered together with other persons and things' (Malpas, 2007: 221). Elden (2001: 36) also draws attention to how Heidegger explains that the first strophe of Hölderlin's Rhine hymn refers to place itself, thus demonstrating his focus on the kinds of places described in the poem. So, even if the earth and the sky in Heidegger's writings are no longer understood in terms of how the earth and the sky enable the biological growth of nature, even if nature does not describe the spontaneous unfolding of nonhuman natural beings, Heidegger is still concerned with the idea of place, with how we can come to be at home in the places we inhabit on the earth and under the sky.

It now becomes clear how the rivers ground human existence in two different senses: as we question the rivers, as we think about how the rivers become rivers for us, we question that

which grounds our understanding of the world. But as we embark on this journeying and begin to question Being, we also attain the locale of our homeland. The river, now appearing to us in a new way, also grounds the physical ground on which we begin to dwell. We become homely by engaging with the beings that we live with. The theme of concentrating on beings was already explored in the last chapter where it was discussed how, for Heidegger, dwelling in the fourfold is about allowing the fourfold to enter into things and about staying with things. This is why, even if Heidegger wants us to question Being itself, he concentrates on these examples of beings. Although he wants us to move away from questioning beings to questioning Being, engaging with beings is still important, something that can guide us towards our homeland. In *Contributions,* Heidegger puts this more explicitly. He explains that a being is always a guide for us as we begin to question Being. This is because when we are questioning Being, what we are asking is 'why and in what sense a being is "a being" for us' (CP: 163; BP: 231).

This account of finding our homeland also draws attention to the importance that place plays in Heidegger's accounts of dwelling. Heidegger (Thing: 164; Ding: 168) explains that place should not be seen as occupying a pre-given space because this thinks of space mathematically. Understanding space in this way is part of technological thinking because mathematically measured distance attempts to clearly define the position of an object without elaborating on its actual location and is thus unable to reveal the essence of beings (BDT: 152; BWD: 156). Heidegger illustrates how, with modern modes of transport and communication, long distances can be overcome quickly, and remote parts of the earth as well as natural processes can be captured on film. Yet, although distance is abolished, this does not mean that the actual location of a thing is being altered or the thing is brought to nearness. This is because experiencing a thing as near or far is not related to the physical proximity of the object. Rather, nearness is experienced when the fourfold gathers into the

thing, when the thing is understood in terms of the particular place and the particular relations that it has with the rest of the world (Thing: 175; Ding: 178). So, at the heart of Heidegger's account of dwelling is also a concern for the places that we inhabit. Things allow a site for a fourfold, they create a dwelling place (BDT: 152; BWD: 156).

Heidegger elaborates on this by looking at how a bridge can create a dwelling place for us. A bridge does not just occupy abstract space but it creates a dwelling place: 'It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream […] The bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream' (BDT: 150; BWD: 154, emphasis original). Different bridges gather this landscape in different ways, and create different kinds of dwelling places. Heidegger discusses the places created by a medieval bridge and a country bridge as follows:

> The city bridge leads from the precincts of the castle to the cathedral square; the river bridge near the country town brings wagons and horse teams to the surrounding village. The old stone bridge's humble brook crossing gives to the harvest wagon its passage from the fields into the village and carries the lumber cart from the field path to the road (BDT: 150; BWD: 154-5).

Here Heidegger describes how these bridges create different dwelling places, and how these places are created through the gathering together of the fourfold.[3] Places, then, do not occupy pre-given spaces but unite a 'network of ways and significations which articulate its space and give meaning to dwelling' (Villela-Petit, 1996: 131).

Heidegger's focus on dwelling, then, is also about how repeated encounters with places allow them to appear familiar to us and allow us to feel homely in these places (Harvey, 1996: 301). As Cloke and Jones (2001: 651) elaborate, dwelling is about the 'rich intimate ongoing togetherness of beings and things which make up landscapes and places'. So, the

[3] Heidegger also discusses the place created by a highway bridge here and I will return to discuss the significance of this in Chapter Five where I look at the role that modern technology plays in dwelling.

importance of place still remains in the way in which the think about the fourfold. What is important in me learning to question nature in my grandparents' garden, questioning what allows the apples to appear as beings, is not learning to question the unfolding of some otherworldly *phusis*. Instead, what is important is allowing the garden to appear as my dwelling place, to learn to dwell amidst the apples.

This explains, in part, why Heidegger focuses on giving accounts of our dwelling places, why he names two elements of the fourfold the sky and the earth and why he concentrates on describing how the fourfold unfolds in the things amidst which we dwell. Although the earth does not describe the material growth and development of beings, it still describes the emergence of the place in which we begin to dwell. However, this discussion does not yet give a complete response to the question of why Heidegger talks about the sky and the earth. It does not yet explain why, if the earth and the sky do not refer to a nonhuman nature, these dwelling places that Heidegger talks about are often rural places, and why he does not give examples of dwelling with technical devices. These questions will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Conclusion

This chapter has re-examined Heidegger's understanding of nature, *phusis* and the earth. It has discussed how Heidegger's *phusis* cannot refer to a distinct set of entities, to entities that rise out of unconcealment on their own accord, and it has demonstrated how Heidegger's earth cannot refer to that which allows for the biological growth and unfolding of natural beings. Instead, *phusis* describes the swaying of Being itself that makes all beings visible to us by granting them their essences, and the earth describes the concealment which always accompanies the unfolding of *phusis*. The earth is not a being, but it is the nothing from

which beings appear to us as beings. The chapter also rethought the meanings of the earth and sky of the fourfold, no longer thinking of these concepts in terms of growth of beings. Rethinking the meaning of *phusis* and the earth allowed for rethinking what it means for Heidegger to question Being. Unlike in the last chapter, where questioning Being was equated with questioning the material growth of beings, questioning Being is now understood as thinking how beings appear to us as beings. The chapter concluded by looking at the important role that the idea of place plays in Heidegger's work, and by looking at how a part of the answer to the question of why Heidegger talks about the unfolding of the sky and the earth in things we usually think of as natural can be found from his occupation with this question of place.

Although this chapter has taken first important steps in thinking about the meaning of nature in Heidegger's work, it still leaves big questions unanswered with regard to the role of nature in Heidegger's thought and with to the relationship that protecting nature has to the green project of protecting the environment. It still remains unclear what it means to protect *phusis,* and what is the relationship between protecting *phusis* and preventing environmental degradation. Does questioning *phusis* require us to reject modern technology, at least to a degree? Does questioning Being lead to a kind of lifestyle that does not make demands on individual beings, and does it have environmentally friendly outcomes even if these kinds of outcomes were not Heidegger's main concern? And finally, if *phusis,* for Heidegger, did not describe the unfolding of nonhuman natural beings, then why does he make so many references to dwelling in areas that we would think of as somehow nonhuman and natural, favouring in particular examples of dwelling in rural areas? Does Heidegger's philosophy, in the end, rest on nostalgia for a pre-technological past where humans did not shape their environments to such a large extent but allowed beings to grow and develop on their own accord? The next chapter will begin to answer these questions by looking in more detail at

how we might protect nature and what kinds of political implications Heidegger's thinking about Being has. The question of the rural examples of dwelling that Heidegger seems to favour will be discussed in Chapter Five. Chapter Five will be the last chapter that focuses on Heidegger's work and Chapter Six will return to green political thinking in order to examine how this new way of thinking about nature can help us make better sense of green goals.

Chapter Four: *Phusis,* Politics and Letting Be

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the idea of nature in Heidegger's work in order to start thinking about the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics. The chapter continued thinking about nature in Heidegger's work after Chapter Two had demonstrated that the mainstream ways of approaching Heidegger's nature cannot hold, that nature and the earth and the sky in his works cannot describe the growth and development of a set of nonhuman beings. The chapter went on to investigate the meanings of nature, or *phusis*, and the earth and the sky, that are understood in the common green readings of Heidegger as referring to the nonhuman environment, and explored new ways of thinking about these concepts. The chapter thought about the meaning of *phusis,* which was the Greek word for nature, it looked at the concealing earth, which plays a role in the happening of truth, and it investigated how we might learn to dwell on the earth and under the sky. By examining these concepts, the chapter demonstrated that Heidegger's *phusis* does not describe the growth and development of a particular set of natural beings but describes how all beings appear to us as beings. The concealing earth does not refer to that which allows for the growth and unfolding of a separate set of natural beings but refers to the concealment that is always a part of the happening of *phusis.* And similarly, the unfolding earth and the sky of the fourfold must also be seen as descriptions of how all beings appear to us as beings and of the appearance of our dwelling place.

So, this would mean that we learn to protect nature when we begin to question the mystery of *phusis*. But the previous chapter only discussed how we should think about the unfolding of *phusis.* It did not ask how we could begin to question *phusis*: it did not explain what relationship this questioning has to protecting the environment and beings themselves, and

what kind of a role this questioning could play in green politics. For the green interpretations of Heidegger discussed in Chapter Two, which equated nature with natural beings, linking questioning Being and protecting beings was relatively straightforward. Heidegger's calls for letting beings be, in particular, seemed to give us practical advice on how to preserve and protect nature. As a result, green thinkers inspired by Heidegger's philosophy were able to suggest concrete actions that help question Being which could be incorporated into the green agenda. Heidegger's advice to let beings be as they are and his description of technological thinking making demands on the environment seemed to further support this interpretation of his thinking. However, as we begin to think of *phusis* as an attempt to question how beings appear to us as beings, it becomes unclear if this kind of questioning is still related to protecting beings themselves.

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it aims to demonstrate that there does not exist a link between questioning *phusis* and protecting beings, that protecting nature must now be divorced from the practice of environmental politics. The chapter does this by looking at Heidegger's own involvements with politics and his thinking on the Greek word *polis*. This discussion is useful because Heidegger's thinking of the *polis* helps us to reflect on the relationship that the *polis* has to the everyday practice of politics. The second purpose of the chapter is to look at how Heidegger's discussion of the *polis* also allows us to think in more depth about what it means to question the unfolding of *phusis* and to protect nature, what it means to dwell and to be at home. This discussion will allow us to understand better what it might mean to question *phusis* and protect nature.

When this chapter discusses Heidegger and politics, the focus is on how Heidegger thought that the everyday practice of politics could help us to question Being. This is because the chapter inquires after the role that questioning *phusis* could play in the every day practice of green politics. The story of Heidegger's political involvements as presented in this chapter is

intended as an exploration into Heidegger's engagements with the everyday practice of politics, and what these engagements can tell us about how we could question *phusis*. It does not attempt to answer questions concerning Heidegger and the political. When I explore how political engagements were absent from *Being and Time* or from Heidegger's later works on dwelling, I do not mean to suggest that the political is absent from these writings, but that Heidegger did not think that the everyday practice of politics could help him to question Being at the time of writing these works. Furthermore, when I explore the kinds of political practices that could help us to question *phusis,* I do not attempt to uncover the kind of politics that Heidegger himself would have promoted. Rather, I explore the kinds of political practices that Heidegger's thinking can guide us towards.

This chapter is divided into seven parts. The first section begins by looking how Heidegger's references to letting beings be are usually thought about by green interpreters of Heidegger. The next four parts then look at the development of Heidegger's thinking on the Greek word *polis*, investigate his engagements with politics and look at the ways in which he thought questioning Being could inform the way we practise politics. The second section of the chapter begins this discussion by looking at Heidegger's engagement with the *polis* in the early 1930s. The third section looks at how his questioning changes when he explores in more detail how we encounter *phusis.* The fourth section investigates how Heidegger thought about the *polis* in the 1940s, and how the way in which he questions Being also changes during this period. The fifth section concludes the discussion of the *polis* by looking at how these different ways Heidegger describes the *polis* can fit together, and how we should think about his *polis*. The sixth section then goes on to examine how we should re-interpret Heidegger's calls for letting beings be. Finally, the seventh section looks at what the discussion presented in this chapter can tell us about the environmental implications of

Heidegger's thinking, and what kind of role politics could play in allowing us to question *phusis*.

Protecting Beings

Heidegger makes many references to protecting beings in his works. This is most notable in his discussion on letting beings be. As was explored in the previous chapter, he first introduces the concept of letting be in 'On the Essence of Truth' where he maintains that to stop making demands on beings, we should encounter beings in their truth. And this, Heidegger explains, happens when we let beings be by remaining open to beings (ET: 147; WW: 88). These references to letting be also appear in his work on dwelling. Here Heidegger describes how the Greeks thought of *techne* in terms of letting-appear (BDT: 157; BWD: 161-2), and how the making of the jug that he discusses in 'The Thing' 'lets the jug come to its own' (Thing, 166; Ding: 168-9). Heidegger elaborates on how we might let beings be and remain open to beings in more detail by introducing a concept of releasement in *Discourse on Thinking*.

Discourse on Thinking comprises of two parts: an address that Heidegger delivered in memory of the composer Conradin Kreutzer and an essay, 'Conversation on A Country Path'. In the Memorial Address, Heidegger discusses how we can learn to release ourselves towards things. The German word that he uses for 'releasement' is 'Gelassenheit'. This verb derives from 'lassen', which means 'to let'. The discussion of 'releasement' is thus about 'letting'. We can release ourselves by learning a different way of thinking, meditative thinking. Meditative thinking lets beings be by paying attention to things that are around us without trying to represent them. We learn meditative thinking when we stay with things:

> [M]editative thinking need by no means be "high-flown." It is enough if we dwell [verweilen] on what lies close and meditate on what is closest; upon that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now; here, on this patch of home ground; now, in the present hour of history (DOT: 47; G:14).

The German word that has been translated here as 'to dwell' is 'verweilen', which means 'to linger', 'to stay', or 'to rest'. It is also related to the word 'die Weile', which means 'a while'. So 'dwelling' here is meant in the sense of 'staying with things', 'to rest with things', 'to quietly contemplate them'. 'Releasement' and 'letting be', then, are about staying with beings in order to allow these beings to reveal themselves to us. It is understood in opposition to imposing meanings on beings by attempting to represent them.

But how does this notion of releasement now link back to the notion of dwelling in the fourfold which was discussed in earlier chapters? As Dreyfus (2002: 170) explains, releasement towards things does not immediately teach us how we might dwell. But adopting this kind of attitude opens up the possibility of learning to dwell: 'Releasement toward things and openness to the mystery give us a vision of a new rootedness which someday might even be fit to recapture the old and now rapidly disappearing rootedness in a changed form' (Heidegger, cited in Dreyfus, 2002: 170). So, in the case of the apple, we can learn releasement when we learn to not always engage with the apple for the sake of something else, for the sake of eating healthily, for the sake of a particular lifestyle we wish to adopt or for the sake of selling it to make a profit. Instead, we must learn to think about how the apple appears to us as a being. This can, in the end, teach us new ways of engaging with the apple.

So, what would this idea of releasement look like in more practical terms, and what kinds of guidelines for protecting beings can we derive from it? Popular interpretations of Heidegger's thinking assume that the idea of letting be is prescribing a particular comportment towards beings. Pearson (2000) explains how releasing ourselves towards beings and letting beings be leads us to adopt an attitude of respect and wonder towards

beings: ‘Questioning now must be understood as a self-opening or as a stance, of receptivity that relates to beings by looking beyond them, in an attitude of wonder or reverential expectation, to their source and ground in concealment and mystery’ (Pearson, 2001: 178, see also Zimmerman, 1994: 221; Mitchell, 2002). Questioning *phusis,* then, would entail adopting a respectful attitude towards beings, an attitude that allows beings to unfold to us as they are. Or as Polt (2011: 27) explains, letting beings be, staying with beings, means to reflect on and respect how these beings unfold as material beings, and to understand that we cannot control this unfolding. The comportment towards beings that has been described here does not have to necessarily be a passive one. In *Discourse on Thinking* Heidegger explains that releasement cannot be understood in terms of activity and passivity, but the notion of releasement lies beyond activity and passivity (DOT: 61; G: 32-3). So according to this way of thinking about letting be, different kinds of engagements with beings can allow for releasement. What is important in releasement is that we allow beings to unfold in a way that is appropriate to them (see e.g. Young, 2002: 105-6).

It would now seem that there exists a link between protecting *phusis* and protecting beings. If protecting *phusis* is thought about in this manner, then it is relatively easy to think about how the task of protecting *phusis* could be incorporated into green politics. In order to protect nature, green politics would have to encourage us to let beings be. But this way thinking about protecting *phusis* still is problematic. Although these accounts of letting be are not attempting to prescribe a passive comportment towards beings, they are prescribing particular, correct ways of encountering beings. Taking the apple as an example again, according to this account, there are correct ways of behaving towards apples that allow us to let the apples be. This means that an alternative way of thinking about protecting *phusis* is needed.

To better understand what it means to let beings be and to understand the relationship that questioning Being has to protecting beings, I am going to look at the evolution of Heidegger's thinking on the *polis,* the Greek word for politics. This inquiry into Heidegger's thinking on the *polis* will be useful for two reasons. First, his attempts to grapple with the question of the *polis* helps us think about the relationship that protecting nature has to the everyday practice of politics. It thus helps us think about the role *phusis* could play in green politics, about how politics could help us protect *phusis* and how this could have an impact on protecting beings themselves. And second, at the heart of Heidegger's questioning of the *polis* lies an inquiry into the relationship between humans and *phusis.* His inquiry into the meaning of the *polis,* then, helps us in thinking about how we encounter *phusis*, how we can learn to question *phusis,* to protect the unfolding of *phusis,* and how we can come to be at home. Heidegger's thinking of the *polis* thus allows us to think about what it really means to protect nature if it is not be understood in terms of protecting beings.

Heidegger, National Socialism and Politics

So, to begin thinking what it means to question *phusis* and how this is not related to protecting beings themselves, I will look at the development of Heidegger's thinking on the Greek word *polis.* This word is usually translated as 'city-state' but Heidegger maintains that it held a different meaning for the Greeks, a meaning that bears a closer relation to the truth of Being. I will begin the inquiry into Heidegger's engagements with the *polis* and politics by investigating his involvements with National Socialism in the early 1930s and by looking at how Heidegger equated the *polis* with the state during this period. I do not want to go into detail concerning Heidegger's involvement with the National Socialism here because I do not wish to make this the central focus of the chapter. This is because it is a topic that has already been scrutinised by many others (see e.g. de Beistegui, 1998; Caputo: 1993; Dallmayr, 1995;

Kisiel, 2002: ch1; Lang: 1996; Phillips, 2005; Rockmore, 1995: ch8; Zimmerman, 1990). Instead, I want to follow Elden's (2000: 408-9) suggestion and look at the evolution of Heidegger's thinking in relation to these involvements. This allows us to think about how these involvements can guide us in interpreting Heidegger's work, how his philosophy relates to the everyday practice of politics and what his philosophy can tell us about how we should conduct politics.

During his early career, Heidegger was silent about the practical and political implications of his questioning of Being. However, in the 1930s, he began to engage with these questions. He felt that developments in industrial technology were threatening more traditional ways of life in Germany, and were prohibiting Germans from questioning the truth of Being. To confront the threat of technological thinking, Heidegger turned to National Socialism. He hoped that Hitler could provide a new beginning for the German people, a beginning that could resist technological thinking. In 1933 Heidegger joined the National Socialist party, and made public speeches in support of Hitler. He also took a more active role in the party by becoming the rector of the University of Freiburg. Thus, it seems that during this time he decided that questioning Being could have a direct impact on how we conduct politics, and could take the form of direct political action.

As rector, Heidegger hoped that he could take action to transform the university in a way that could help the German Volk to question Being. He presents his vision for the new role that universities should take in his inaugural lecture, his rectoral address. Although the rectoral address did not mention race, it made numerous references to other Nazi themes, such as the German Volk, earth and blood (Wolin, 1990: 85; Elden, 2006b: 80-1). In this address, it also becomes clear that Heidegger thought philosophy itself could have a role in shaping politics and the history of the German Volk. In the address Heidegger explains how thinkers themselves in the university should be able to take concrete actions to guide the

German nation towards a new beginning: 'the students' will to essence must force itself into the highest clarity and discipline of knowledge and must shape, through its demands and determinations, the engaged knowledge of the Volk and its state and incorporate this knowledge into the essence of science' (SA: 37). The university, in this way, would serve the German Volk and would prepare men for serving the German state. The task that Heidegger saw for the university was not an easy one, but it was based on struggle: 'All capacities of will and thought, all strengths of the heart, and all capabilities of the body must be developed *through* struggle, must be intensified *in* struggle, and must remain preserved *as* struggle' (SA: 37, emphasis original).

The National Socialist party, however, did not take the direction that Heidegger had hoped, and he resigned from his position as rector in 1934. Although Heidegger had sympathies for National Socialism, he eventually became disillusioned with the party and concluded that National Socialism itself was a part of technological thinking, preoccupied with the efficient ordering of beings instead of questioning Being (Harries, 1978: 305). As Phillips (2005) explains, what for the National Socialists was a question of a biologically founded community of German people was, for Heidegger, a question of a historical community of people. This historical community is not grounded in biological race but in a common history and in shared understandings of Being. In the end, National Socialism turned out to be too technological, too involved with beings and not radical enough in the way that Heidegger had hoped. Thus, it could not offer a new beginning for Germany (Phillips, 2005: 14-15). Heidegger did, however, remain a member of the party until the end of the war.

Because questioning Being led Heidegger to take a stand on the organisation of politics during this period, it seems that he did not want to separate questioning Being from politics. During this time, Heidegger also made his first references to *polis*, and associated the Greek word *polis* with the state itself (de Beistegui, 1998: 57-8; Elden, 2000: 409). This raises

serious concerns as to whether we should let questioning Being guide our politics. Heidegger himself begins to grapple with these questions after his resignation as rector. He begins to ask if the link between questioning Being and politics is as straightforward as he had thought before (Elden: 2000: 416). He also begins to think in more detail about the *polis* and examined how it cannot be simply equated with the state. The relationship between politics and questioning Being is, then, more complicated than Heidegger's engagements with the idea of the *polis* during this period would suggest. He never apologised for his involvements with National Socialism. However, some kind of response to these involvements and a possible explanation for his silence begins to emerge from his works after 1934. Heidegger's rethinking of the *polis* begins soon after his resignation with the lecture course *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and it is to this discussion of the *polis* that I shall turn to next.

Shift in Questioning Polis

In *Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger begins to distance himself from National Socialism. His treatment of the *polis* undergoes a change and here he no longer thinks that the *polis* can be equated with the state. Heidegger's thinking of the meaning of the *polis* follows a discussion of how humans encounter *phusis* and through this, establish beings as beings. This discussion can, then, help us start thinking about how we encounter *phusis* and we can come to be at home. In *Introduction to Metaphysics*, the relationship between humans and *phusis* is understood as a violent encounter. The language that Heidegger uses in this lecture course is similar to the language he used to describe the happening of truth in 'Origins of the Work of Art' as a strife between the earth and the world, and also bears similarities to the more confrontational tone of the rectoral address.

These explorations into the nature of *phusis* and the *polis* are framed around a reading of Sopocholes' *Antigone.* Heidegger concentrates on interpreting the opening strophes of *Antigone*. This is the first movement of these strophes in full:

Manifold is the uncanny, yet nothing
uncannier than man bestirs itself, rising up beyond him.
He fares forth upon the foaming tide
amid winter's southerly tempest
and cruises through the summits
of the raging, clefted swells.
The noblest of gods as well, the earth,
the indestructibly untiring, he wearies,
overturning her from year to year,
driving the plows this way and that
with his steeds. (IM: 156)

So what are these opening strophes of *Antigone* about and why are they important for our understanding of *phusis*? Because of the detailed description of the winter storm, we could easily conclude that these strophes tell the story of man's evolution as he encounters the violent forces of the surrounding environment and learns to master this environment. But Heidegger claims that the verses tell something more fundamental than this. They do not tell the story of man's encounter with nature understood in a conventional sense but they tell about man's encounter with *phusis*, about revealing beings as beings (IM: 159; EM: 114). The winter storm, then, describes the unfolding of *phusis* itself that, as explored in the previous chapter, cannot be equated with the nonhuman environment.

Heidegger begins his interpretation of this passage by looking at the mention of 'uncanny' in the beginning of the passage. The first reference to 'uncanny' in the first line, he explains,

refers to the swaying *phusis*. I will return to the meaning of 'swaying' in the next paragraph, after looking at the meaning of 'uncanny' in more detail. The original Greek word for 'uncanny' is *deinon*, which Heidegger explains means 'violent'. But he does not want to use the word 'violent' here as referring to those everyday things that we might find frightening, to what he calls 'petty terrors' (IM: 159; EM: 114). Instead, Heidegger maintains that 'violent' is meant here as 'the terrible in the sense of the overwhelming sway, which induces panicked fear, true anxiety, as well as collected, inwardly reverberating, reticent awe' (IM: 159; EM: 114-5). 'Violent', then, refers to that which is most frightening and, at the same, time awe-inspiring. It is that which does not allow us to be at home (IM: 168; EM: 115-6).

So here Heidegger describes the swaying of *phusis* as violent and awe-inspiring. The use of the verb 'to sway' to describe the unfolding of *phusis* might seem puzzling at first. Indeed, Heidegger's original German has connotations that cannot be easily translated into English. What here is translated as 'swaying' is in German the verb 'walten', which means 'to prevail' and 'to reign'. The verb 'walten' is also related to the word 'Gewalt', or 'violence'. The root of 'Gewalt' is '-walt', which means 'force', and is also related to words denoting 'governance' and 'authority'. 'Gewalt', then, does not only refer to arbitrary violence but also to power used in governance, and it is this latter meaning of 'Gewalt' that Heidegger wants to turn our attention to (IM: 161; EM: 115). Thus, saying that *phusis* sways highlights that *phusis* does not unfold in an arbitrary fashion but it has an inherent order. The Greeks named the order of the unfolding *phusis dike,* which is usually translated as 'law'. But Heidegger translates *dike* as 'fittingness'. He explains that 'we understand fittingness first in the sense of joint and structure; then as arrangement, as the direction that the overwhelming gives to its sway; finally, as the enjoining structure, which compels fitting-in and compliance' (IM: 171; EM: 123). So *phusis* has a law, an inherent structure and arrangement, according to which it unfolds. Its swaying is not arbitrary.

But it is not only the overwhelming *phusis* that is identified as uncanny in these verses; humans are described as uncanny as well. Indeed, the second line of the opening movement claims that nothing is more uncanny than man. Humans are uncanny because they use violence to disturb the sway of *phusis,* which has its own order, to establish beings as beings. The second movement describes how humans disturb *phusis* in more detail*:*

Even the lightly gliding flock of birds
he snares, and he hunts
the beast folk of the wilderness
and the brood whose home is the sea,
the man who studies wherever he goes.
With ruses he overwhelms the beast
that spends its nights on mountains and roams,
and clasping with wood
the rough-maned neck of the steed
and the unvanquished bull
he forces them into the yoke. (IM: 156-7)

So humans impose their own order on the violently unfolding *phusis* as they encounter *phusis,* establishing beings as beings. But why does this encounter have to be a violent one?

The answer to this question is related to how Heidegger understands the happening of truth as a complex unfolding that can never be expressed or represented through correct statements. Humans break out against *dike* because they can never fully bring *phusis* into appearance in beings*:* 'breaking-forth and breakup happen only insofar as the powers of language, of understanding, of mood, and of building are themselves surmounted in doing violence' (IM: 167; EM: 120). The sway of *phusis* is so complex that every time we try to

bring *phusis* to stand in beings, this has to happen 'in the midst of the booming and buzzing confusion of things' (Dahlstrom, 2001a: 93). Thus, we necessarily perform an act of violence against *phusis*. Here it also becomes clear that although Heidegger uses confrontational language that bears similarities to the language used by National Socialists, he is not talking about violence, struggle or confrontation in relation to beings themselves. The violence he talks about does not describe violence against beings, but describes violence against *phusis*. But if we begin to think of the happening of truth and our confrontation with *phusis* as a violent encounter, can this encounter still be thought of as a better way of encountering beings than technological thinking?

To answer this question, Heidegger looks at the Greek word *techne* from which the modern word 'technology' is derived. However, unlike technological thinking, the Greek *techne* allows us to encounter beings in their truth. *Techne* has a much broader meaning than 'technology', it not only refers to the work of a craftsman or to those things that we today would think of as technical. This is because for the Greeks, *techne* means a kind of knowing that is present in all human works:

> Knowing, in the genuine sense of *techne*, means initially [anfängliche] and constantly [ständige] looking out beyond what, in each case, is directly present at hand. In different ways and on different routes and in different domains, this Being-out-beyond sets to work in advance that which first gives to what is already present at hand its relative justification, its possible determinateness, and thus its limit. Knowing is the ability to set Being into work as something that in each case is in such and such a way (IM: 169-7; EM: 122).

So unlike technological thinking that represents beings, in *techne,* the focus is on our knowledge of Being, and on bringing Being to stand in beings. *Techne* breaks out against *dike,* the order of *phusis,* but it still has knowledge of *phusis*. And because of this, *techne* brings *phusis* to stand in beings and allows for the happening of truth. Although this encounter is violent, *techne* still pays attention to and respects *dike,* and this is something that technological thinking is unable to do.

Heidegger goes on to discuss how art, in particular, is an example of *techne.* The emphasis that he places on art is important because it shows that *phusis* will always remain something inexpressible, something that can be brought into presence in the work of art but cannot be made explicit, explained or understood (IM: 167; EM: 122). This emphasis on the work of art can also be seen in other lecture courses that Heidegger gave in the mid-1930s, and it is related to the accounts of the happening of truth given by him during this time. As discussed in the previous chapter, in 1935 Heidegger delivered the lecture 'Origins of the Work of Art', which discusses in detail how art can reveal Being through the strife between the earth and the world, between concealment and unconcealment.

The next two movements of Antigone's opening strophes then go on to discuss in more detail the consequences of violently encountering *phusis*. This violent encounter means that the interpretation that humans have of beings is groundless. The fifth verse of these opening strophes explains: 'Everywhere trying out, underway; untried, with no way out /he comes to Nothing (IM: 157; EM: 113).' The idea of the Nothing was already discussed in the last chapter. The Nothing is the concealing earth, that which is not yet a being itself but from which beings can appear to us as beings. So this means that revealing beings always requires an active engagement from humans in the form of *techne.* The swaying of *phusis* itself does not yet determine how beings appear as beings because it does not provide a stable ground for the existence of beings.

Reflecting on our violent confrontation with *phusis* finally brings Heidegger to the question of the *polis*. Although the *polis* is usually translated as a 'city-state', he maintains that this is not the meaning that it held for the Greeks. So here Heidegger's interpretation of the *polis* shifts, the *polis* is no longer identified with the state. But the *polis* and the political are still linked because, as I will explain later, we can start thinking of the political in terms of the *polis.* So what is the *polis?* Heidegger explains that the ' The *polis* is the name for the

site, the Here, within which and as which Being-here is historically, the site of history, the here, *in* which, *out of* which and *from* which history happens' (IM: 162; EM: 117, emphasis original). The *polis* is first established when humans encounter the sway of *phusis,* bring *phusis* to stand and establish beings, revealing the truth of Being in beings (IM: 182; EM: 131). This site encompasses the society as a whole: 'To this site of history belong the gods, the temples, the priests, the celebrations, the games, the poets, the thinkers, the ruler, the council of elders, the assembly of the people, the armed forces, and the ships' (IM: 162-3; EM: 117). But Heidegger emphasises that all these do not belong to the *polis* because they share a relationship with the statesmen or with the generals, because of political relations in the sense that we understand politics today. Instead, all these belong to the political because they engage with beings that have been established as beings through a violent encounter with *phusis* (IM: 163; EM; 117). So *polis* here is no longer equated with the state. Instead, it refers to that which exists prior to the political, to that which allows beings to appear to us as beings in the first place. The question of the *polis* and the question of how we can come to be at home, then, is a question of our confrontation with *phusis*.

But who confronts *phusis* and establishes beings as beings in the first place? Heidegger explains that the struggle that establishes the *polis* is 'sustained by the creators, by the poets, thinkers, and statesmen' (IM: 65; EM: 47). Listing the poet here as opposed to the artist might seem puzzling, particularly because before we examined how Heidegger talks about art as a whole as something that plays an important role in allowing beings to appear as beings. The reason for this mention of the poet is that Heidegger thinks all art is in its essence poetry. This is because, as discussed in the previous chapters, he privileges language in questioning Being: Being itself speaks to us through language. Language is what allows the artist to make sense of the world, and is that which allows beings to appear as beings. All art, according to Heidegger, must, then, rest on poetry (OWA: 70-1; UK: 59-61). This is why we can often

find him referring to poetry alone when we would expect him to be talking about art as a whole. This is something to keep in mind because we will encounter more of these references to poetry later on. Mentioning the thinker as playing a part in establishing the *polis* is less surprising. The role of thinking in questioning Being is a topic that was already examined in the previous chapter, and it should not seem strange that Heidegger here is pairing thinking and poetry. Thinking here is not meant in terms of forming statements and definitions of things, but it is meant as something that questions *phusis*, and it is thus similar to art (see e.g. WCT: 165; WHD: 103).

What is interesting in this passage is the reference to the statesmen participating in establishing the *polis.* Although we can see from the emphasis on the role of the thinkers and the poets in establishing the *polis* that Heidegger is beginning to distance the happening of the *polis* from the everyday affairs of the state*,* this reference to the statesmen demonstrates that the *polis* is not yet banished entirely from the sphere of politics, and the statesmen can participate in establishing the *polis*. This is because Heidegger is interested in questioning how the way in which we confront *phusis* allows beings to appear to us in a certain way, and how certain ways of conducting politics allow for certain ways of bringing *phusis* to stand (see Blitz, 1981). For example, the Western liberal tradition is based on a particular conception of humans as individual beings with rights. So, the statesmen participate in the happening of the *polis* by conducting politics and finding new ways of conducting politics that confront *phusis* in a different way.

Heidegger's description of this violent encounter between humans and *phusis* now helps us arrive at a different understanding of the relationship between questioning *phusis* and protecting beings. Protecting *phusis* and finding our homeland is now about preserving the strife between humans and *phusis,* it is about human *techne* breaking out against the order of *dike.* What is significant in this confrontation is that we do not encounter *phusis* as such when

we establish beings as beings, but human interpretation and confrontation is always required for revealing beings. Thus, as Fried (2001: 85) explains, '[f]or Being to emerge into unconcealment, and for Dasein to let beings be, Dasein cannot remain passive; it must confront the given interpretation of the world'. There is no unfolding of *phusis* that is proper to beings. These interpretations emerge from that which is nothing, from that which is not yet a being, from the concealing earth itself (see also Ward, 1995: 206).

This discussion of how humans encounter *phusis* and this rethinking of the *polis* as a violent encounter now casts doubts on whether questioning Being can help us in protecting the apple. As the role of the statesmen in establishing the *polis* demonstrated, questioning Being does not have to be wholly divorced from politics, the statesmen themselves, in addition to the poets and the thinkers, can violently confront *phusis* and establish the *polis.* But we now need to rethink the consequences that violently confronting *phusis* has for protecting beings.

To explain why this is so, I am going to return to examining how we can question the unfolding of *phusis* in my grandparents' garden. To do this, we would have to confront *phusis* anew and find new ways of thinking about the apples in the garden as something that are not simply to be grown as efficiently as possible, as a resource to be sold. Instead, we would have to concentrate on how the apple is revealed to us as a being in the first place. But what the account of the violent encounter between humans and *phusis* draws our attention to is that confronting *phusis* and finding new ways of questioning the apple do not necessarily guide us towards environmentally friendly attitudes. This is because respecting the spontaneous growth of the apple and the secure rhythm of changing seasons are both already violent interpretations of the unfolding of *phusis*, products of a violent encounter between *dike* and *techne*. There are many ways in which this violent encounter can take place and there is no guarantee that it will happen in a particular way, that we will begin to think of the

apple as something that must unfold spontaneously, respecting the rhythms of the changing seasons. We could start thinking of the apple as something that will only really be an apple when it is baked into a pie. This would focus on the consumption of the apple, and there is nothing that guarantees that this consumption would be sustainable.

So, Heidegger's interpretation of *Antigone* in *Introduction to Metaphysics* allows us to begin to make sense of what it means to protect *phusis* and why this cannot be guaranteed to be environmentally friendly. However, his questioning here still does not fully explain how we should question the unfolding of *phusis* and what it means to protect nature. His central focus is still on questioning how beings are revealed to us as beings when we encounter *phusis*. This can best be seen in the role that the statesmen, who do not think about Being but organise beings, play in establishing the *polis.* So in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger does not have much to say about how we learn to encounter *phusis*, what kind of thinking or questioning allows us to encounter *phusis*. But as he continues to question *phusis* and the *polis,* he begins to address these questions. As Heidegger does this, he provides a different reading of the relationship between humans and *phusis*, explaining what it means to question *phusis* and what consequences it has for our thinking of the *polis.* He also begins to think more about how we can find our homeland through our encounter with *phusis.* It is, however, still important to keep in mind what Heidegger said about the *polis* in *Introduction to Metaphysics* because, as I will demonstrate at the end of the chapter, it will help us in interpreting how he thought about the *polis* in his later work.

Ister and Homecoming

Heidegger presents a new way of thinking about the *polis* seven years later, in a lecture course on Hölderlin's poem on the river Ister. This discussion on the *polis* takes place in

conjunction with a longer discussion on how we can come to be at home. As was already discussed in the previous chapter, the way in which Heidegger questions the homeland in this lecture course is different from how he questioned the homeland in *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'Rhine'*, delivered seven years earlier, around the same time as *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Whereas in *Hölderlin's Hymns 'Germania' and 'Rhine'* it is the poet and the poetic descriptions of the rivers that can help the German people to found their homeland, in *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, the focus is different. Heidegger now discusses how we might come to know our homeland in different language. The poet no longer founds the homeland, but he can help us find the mood that guides us towards questioning Being.

A similar shift can be observed in the way that Heidegger discusses the *polis* in this lecture course. Here, he returns to *Antigone* and to the question of the *polis* in order to provide a new interpretation of *Antigone*. In this new interpretation, the central theme of the opening strophes of *Antigone* is no longer the violence between humans and *phusis.* Instead, Heidegger explains that these verses concentrate on describing the homelessness of humans and on thinking how humans can become homely. The theme of the homeland in Heidegger's writings is already familiar to us as I explored its importance in the previous chapter by looking at how finding our homeland is about the finding the place in which we come to dwell. In the lecture course on the Ister, thinking about this homeland further results in a different way of thinking about the *polis*.

So how is the account of how we confront *phusis* and the interpretation of *Antigone* now different? In this new interpretation of *Antigone*, *deinon,* that describes both *phusis* and humans, is still translated as 'uncanny', but the meaning of 'uncanny' changes. Instead of understanding 'uncanny' as violent, Heidegger identifies three different meanings for this word. *Deinon* is now described as fearful, powerful and frightful:

> The fearful is something frightful, yet also that which commands admiration. The fearful shows itself both in honour and in awe. The powerful can be that which everywhere prevails and looms over us, yet also that which is actively violent, that force that compels all necessity into a singular, uniform compulsion (IE: 67; IG: 77).

This way of thinking about 'uncanny' is not completely divorced from the interpretation of 'uncanny' that Heidegger presented in *Introduction to Metaphysics*: *deinon* is still understood as something powerful that can also be violent. But violence is no longer the main way in which we are to think about the meaning of 'uncanny', now 'uncanny' also refers to the fearful and the frightful.

Heidegger wants to start thinking about these different meanings of 'uncanny' in their unity, as words that always belong together (IE: 68; IG: 76). He goes on to argue that a word that encompasses all these three different meanings is 'inhabitual': 'The inhabitual is the extraordinary that directly and essentially exceeds everything habitual, is that in a certain way it stands "outside" the habitual' (IE: 67; IG: 77). To explain the full significance of understanding *deinon* as 'inhabitual' Heidegger also draws attention to how the German word for 'uncanny', 'das Unheimliche', is related to the word 'das Unheimische', which means 'unhomely'. The uncanny is related to unhomeliness: humans are uncanny and inhabitual because they are not homely (IE: 71; IG: 87). The encounter with *phusis* and becoming homely, then, describes how we learn to venture beyond those beings that are familiar to us to encounter the uncanny, frightening *phusis* and through this, learn to be at home.

So in the lecture course on the Ister, Heidegger depicts humans as being unhomely because they exist amongst beings. It is the task of humans to learn to question Being, to come to be at home. Dasein no longer encounters *phusis* for the sake of revealing beings, but for the sake of becoming homely amidst beings. De Beistegui (1998: 108) explains how the homeland is not something that exists in the beginning but it is something that we find through

journeying: 'this moment of return is not a movement of returning to something that was originally, but that the origin itself is constituted through this movement of return'.

The interpretation of *deinon* in the lecture course on 'Ister' also marks a shift in the kind of language that Heidegger uses to question the *polis*, shedding further light into how we should approach the meaning of the *polis.* The question of the *polis* is now the question of the unfolding of the truth of Being that determines the essence of all beings (IE: 84; IG: 106). Because Heidegger attempts to talk about the *polis* in terms of Being rather than beings, he becomes less certain about his abilities to explain what the *polis* really is:

> Perhaps the *polis* is that realm and locale around which everything question-worthy and uncanny turns in an exceptional sense. The *polis* is *polos,* that is, the pole, the swirl, in which and around which everything turns. […] The human being is then related in an exceptional sense to this pole, in so far as human beings, in understanding being, stand in the midst of beings and here essentially have a status in each case, a stance in their instances and circumstances (HI 81; IG: 100).

The discussion here is similar to the description of the *polis* that was presented in *Introduction to Metaphysics* but a shift in Heidegger's thinking akin to the shift that took place in his interpretation of *deinon* can be recognised. He is not asking about the meaning of the *polis* in terms of beings, in terms of how beings are revealed as beings, but he is asking about the *polis* for the sake of Being. This is why Heidegger's *polis* will always remain something question-worthy, and this is why he starts his description of the *polis* with a 'perhaps'. He is here journeying into the mystery of Being itself. He cannot fully express what it means to question Being and what consequences this questioning can have.

The way in which the *polis* is established also changes here. Because the *polis* is no longer understood in terms of how beings are revealed as beings but in terms of Being itself, the *polis* is no longer established by the statesmen. It is now only the poets and the thinkers who establish the *polis* (IE: 146; IG: 182). The description of the *polis* no longer touches on how to establish beings as beings, but it is now about questioning *phusis,* about finding our

homeland and about existing in nearness to Being. This is a task that the statesman cannot undertake. It is, instead, a task for the poets and the thinkers to act as our guides as we search for the homeland. But how do the poets and the thinkers guide us towards our homeland? Is there any decisive moment when the poets and the thinkers are able to act as our guides? This question can be answered by turning to the beginning of the lecture course on 'Ister' where Heidegger questions the opening line of Hölderlin's Ister Hymn.

This poem begins with the words 'Now, come fire'. 'Fire' here refers to that which makes the day visible (IE: 7; IG: 6). The question of when the *polis* is established, then, is a question of what 'now' refers to in this line. Heidegger explains that 'now' 'names the time of calling of those who are of a calling, a time of poets. Such a time is determined out of that which the poets are called upon to poetize their poetry' (IE: 8 IG: 8). So 'now' does not refer to a time that can be measured or calculated, to the kind of time that can be recorded and might be of use for the statesman. Instead, it refers to the time of the poet questioning and thinking about Being, to a time we can never point to because this questioning is a process that we cannot fully grasp. So this means that we cannot explain what the *polis* is*,* explain when and how the *polis* is established. Instead, we can only question the *polis.* The sphere of the *polis* does not lie in the activities of the statesmen and it does not lie in effectively mobilising a nation to confront *phusis,* but it lies in this questioning.

But what exactly does it mean to establish the *polis* and find our homeland? Heidegger does not explain this and cannot do so because Being is not something we can explain. Instead of prescribing how we should think of Being, he is attempting to prepare a way for us to leap into a different way of thinking without being able to explain how we are, in the end, to take this leap (WCT: 12-13; WHD: 48). Ben-Dor (2007) suggests that Heidegger's response to his political involvements can also be found from this inability to express the meaning of the *polis*. For Heidegger now, to think about Being is to stay silent: 'Being silent

is to heed to the inexpressible and to respond to it' (Ben-Dor, 2007: 404). Thus, as Ben-Dor puts it, 'Better to speak about Being rather than to construct a theory of Being' (Ben-Dor, 2007: 70). Heidegger's account of establishing the *polis* now looks different than it did in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. It is no longer about the statesmen founding the *polis* and finding a new destiny for a community. The journey towards our homeland is not a journey we can explain or understand because it will be, in the end, our own personal journey of questioning which the poets and the thinkers can only guide.

I am going to return to investigating how we exist in our homeland and in the *polis* in more detail at the end of this chapter when revisiting what it means to let beings be. But before this, I will look at how the way of thinking about the *polis* presented in the lecture course on 'Ister' can be fitted together with the account of the *polis* Heidegger presented in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and how these two accounts together can tell us something about the *polis* and its relationship to the political.

Ister and Introduction to Metaphysics

So what can all of this now tell us about the relationship between questioning *phusis* and protecting beings? Some have suggested that the shift in Heidegger's thinking which takes place in the lecture course on 'Ister' means that what he said about encountering *phusis* in *Introduction to Metaphysics* now becomes invalid. Pearson (2001, see also Zimmerman, 1990: 120-1; Wright, 1999) argues that the shift in the way in which *deinon* is interpreted signifies a change in the way that Heidegger understands the meaning of *phusis* and letting be. Because his focus is now less on violence and more on awe when describing how we encounter *phusis*, the encounter with *phusis* in this lecture course is not violent in character. Heidegger is no longer emphasising the active role of humans in bringing *phusis* to stand. So

according to Pearson, the interpretation of *deinon* in the lecture course on 'Ister' offers a new interpretation of *deinon* that replaces the one presented by Heidegger in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Only this new interpretation can be used to make sense of what it means to let beings be and how we should comport ourselves towards beings.

But making a distinction between these two different interpretations is not as simple as it seems at first. Fried (2000: 83) and de Beistegui (1998: 141) point out that what is also significant is that Heidegger's actual translation of *Antigone's* opening strophes is the same in these two lecture courses. And translation, Heidegger maintains, is always an important part of the interpretation itself (IE: 61-2; IG: 74-6). So if his interpretation of *Antigone* had changed, we would also expect to find a new translation of these opening strophes. Fried (2001: 85) also encourages us to look closer at how the focus on quiet questioning and concepts such as letting be were already present in Heidegger's earlier works such in 'On the Essence of Truth' and were not first introduced in his later works. This means that thinking of violence and letting be as two different, mutually exclusive, ways of comporting ourselves towards *phusis* becomes difficult. Thus, there is no evidence that Heidegger goes on to provide a new interpretation of *deinon* in *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*.

How, then, can we reconcile these two different readings of *Antigone?* De Beistegui (1998: 142-3; see also Ward, 1995: 190) argues that in the lecture course on 'Ister' Heidegger's interpretation of *Antigone* does not change, but what changes is the question that he wants to answer through his reading of *Antigone*. So, the interpretation of the *polis* in *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* does not point to a change in Heidegger's interpretation, but it points to a change in his focus. In the lecture course on 'Ister', Heidegger is not questioning how beings appear to us as beings as he did in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. De Beistegui explains that in *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, the question of *phusis* is a question of how we can become homely amidst Being itself: 'After all, the reading of 1935 served as an introduction *into*

metaphysics, whereas, in the 1940s, it is for Heidegger a matter of thinking before and beyond metaphysics: a matter of leaving metaphysics' (de Beistegui, 1998: 143, emphasis original).

And although Heidegger's references to the homeland in *Introduction to Metaphysics* remain scarce, this does not mean that he was not concerned with the question of homecoming in *Introduction to Metaphysics*. As suggested by Mugerauer (2008), Heidegger's way of thinking about the homeland had developed when he was delivering the lecture course on 'Ister'. During the time of delivering *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger's focus was still on how we are not at home, and how, to find our homeland, we must encounter the uncanny, venture out of this homelessness to confront the swaying of *phusis* (Mugerauer, 2008: 58-9).

But when Heidegger delivered the Ister lecture course, his thinking had developed, and he was able to better explain how we venture into the foreign, how we confront *phusis*, and how this allows us to journey towards our homeland. The relationship that this way of thinking about the *polis* has to the violent encounter with *phusis* that Heidegger discussed in *Introduction to Metaphysics* can be seen in how he addresses the question of the relationship between Being and violence in another lecture course on Hölderlin's poetry. Here, Heidegger emphasises the importance of shyness as we begin to question Being. Shyness refers to quiet questioning that cannot make statements about beings themselves: 'Shyness is that reserved, patient, astonished remembrance of that which remains near in a nearness' (EHP: 153; EHD: 131). This shyness, Heidegger states, is 'more decisive than all violence' (EHP: 153; EHD: 132). So here, Heidegger does not deny the significance of violence, but maintains that shyness is more decisive. This is because shyness does not describe how *phusis* is encountered for the sake of revealing beings, but it describes how *phusis* is encountered for the sake of Being itself.

So this means that these two interpretations of *Antigone* in *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* and in *Introduction to Metaphysics* together can help us think about the relationship between questioning *phusis* and protecting beings. Through the account of violence in *Introduction to Metaphysics* we can learn about how we establish beings as beings and how this is a violent encounter that cannot be guaranteed to have environmentally friendly outcomes. The account in *Introduction to Metaphysics* does not tell us much about how we can come to be at home because it is concentrating on describing how we can begin our journey to home by turning toward the uncanny *phusis*. But the account of *phusis* in *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'* is about questioning Being itself and this is why it is more decisive than a violent confrontation with *phusis*. This is the kind of questioning that, in the end, allows us to question Being, to go beyond asking how beings appear to us as beings and to question the *polis* itself.

The development of Heidegger's thinking of the *polis* also allows for finding a response to the concerns raised by his involvement with National Socialism from the way in which Heidegger's thinking of the *polis* changes in his later works. In his later works, establishing the *polis* and finding our homeland is no longer about how a community searches for its common homeland but it is about our individual journeys as we embark on a journey towards becoming homely. The politicians can no longer found the *polis,* the journey towards our homeland is secret and intimate, the statesmen cannot dictate how this journey unfolds but only the poets and the thinkers can guide our paths along this journey. The *polis* is now associated with the inexpressible and no longer with larger political projects aimed at finding a new destiny for a community of people.

Letting Be

So what about the ideas of letting be and releasement that were discussed at the beginning of the chapter? How could we start thinking about letting be and releasement differently when Heidegger's interpretation of letting be seems to explicitly state that it is about comporting ourselves towards beings in particular ways? Investigating this is the purpose of the current section. Revisiting our understandings of letting be and releasement is also useful because it helps us better understand *polis*. As Mugenaeur (2008) explains, in Heidegger's later writings on letting be that I am going to explore here, Heidegger was returning to his homeland, and what he is now trying to articulate is how we can stay in our homeland. These writings, then, can help us think more about how we stay in the *polis* and how we can dwell in our homeland.

Clues for how we can revise our understanding of letting be can be found from a seminar that Heidegger gave in le Thor in France in 1969 where he elaborates on the meaning of letting be. He begins by thinking about what it means to say that there is a being. Here, Heidegger portrays letting be as a similar kind of going beyond beings as the meaning of *deinon* in *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*. Letting, he maintains, must not be thought of as prescribing a particular comportment towards beings, but instead, it must be thought of as giving. The meaning of 'giving' can be understood by looking at the German expression 'es gibt', which means 'there is.' 'Es gibt', however, has a different meaning from the English 'there is'. Literally translated into English, it means 'it gives', and thus it refers to that which gives us beings. Heidegger, however, maintains that we must be careful when thinking about the meaning of 'giving' because we easily slip into metaphysical thinking when reflecting on it. It is easy to think of 'giving' as referring to beings themselves, as describing the fact that there are beings. This could happen if, for example, if, when we encounter an apple tree, what would concern us the most would be the fact that there are apples in the tree.

So how can we, then, avoid this way of interpreting letting? To find another way of thinking about letting be, instead of concentrating on the being that is, we can focus on the 'giving' in 'es gibt'. We can ask how a being unconceals itself to us, we can concentrate on how the being has emerged as a particular being, why we can think of that particular being as a being. So, we could concentrate on thinking about what gives us an apple, what allowed the apple to appear as an apple. This seems to be the kind of interpretation of letting be that is advocated by the green thinkers who ask how the apple appears as a being. But crucially, Heidegger maintains that this second way of understanding letting is still part of metaphysical thinking. This is because it concentrates on the being as a being, it inquires about letting be for the sake of beings themselves. We are still concerned with the appearance of the apple itself.

But there is a third way of understanding what it means to let things be that is not a part of metaphysical thinking. This third way of understanding letting be does not refer to how beings rise into presence and unfold to us as beings. This way of approaching letting be is not about beings, but it focuses on that which gives us beings, on that which allows beings to appear to us as beings. If we concentrate on this, then 'there is no longer room for the very name of being. *Letting,* is then the pure *giving,* which itself refers to the it that gives' (FS: 60, emphasis original). So the emphasis is now on that which allows beings to rise into presence in the first place, not on prescribing particular comportments towards beings themselves (see Haugeland, 2007). Here we can also observe how Heidegger is struggling to talk about this 'it': he explains that 'it gives' but he cannot say that 'it is' because this 'it' is not itself another being.

Can we also start thinking of releasement as this kind of attempt to go beyond beings? We can, and revisiting the idea of releasement also helps us start thinking about how we might learn to let beings be, to go beyond beings and to question *phusis*. To explore this, I want to

concentrate on the second part of *Discourse on Thinking*, 'Conversation on a Countrypath'. This piece of writing depicts a conversation taking place between three participants, a teacher, a scholar and a scientist. In this dialogue, Heidegger elaborates on what it means to venture beyond the realm of human representation. Releasement, he explains, is a journey into something nonhuman. But in 'Conversation on A Country Path' it becomes clear that 'nonhuman' does not refer to the nonhuman beings with which we learn to stay as we release ourselves towards them. The following passage from 'Conversation on A Country Path' helps make sense of this nonhuman element in releasement:

> Teacher: What is it that you designated by the name releasement?
>
> Scientist: If I may say so, not I but you have used this name.
>
> Teacher: I, as little as you, have done the designating.
>
> Scholar: Then who did it? None of us?
>
> Teacher: Presumably, for in the region in which we stay everything is in the best order only if it has been no one's doing.
>
> Scientist: A mysterious region where there is nothing for which to be answerable.
>
> Teacher: Because it is the region of the word, which is answerable to itself alone.
>
> Scholar: For us it remains only to listen to the answer proper to the word.
>
> (DOT, 71: G: 46-7)

So here it would seem that the naming, the word, not the material being, is the nonhuman element that comes to us. But why is listening to the word significant here?

This can be understood if we recall what was said about language in the last chapter. As we started thinking of *phusis* differently, as that which allows beings to appear to us as beings, language also acquired a different role. As was already described in previous chapters, language, for Heidegger, is something that is always ahead of us, there is always a wealth of meanings in language that we cannot fully grasp or understand. This is because language is not created by us alone, but we are merely one of the participants in creating new meanings and understandings. These words are not under the conscious control of any one human.

Although we all participate in how these meanings emerge and come about, it is never only one human who does the naming and the designating, and this is never a conscious activity (WL: 124; WS: 243). The nonhuman in releasement, then, does not refer to beings themselves, but it refers to that which is not yet a being, to the concealing earth. This would mean that the nonhuman in releasement refers to that which allows for revealing beings as beings, it refers to the swaying of *phusis*. So, as we learn to release ourselves towards things, we do not let beings themselves unfold to us as they really are, but we allow the words that speak about these beings to come to us.

What does this releasement, understood as a journey into the nonhuman, look like, then, and how can we learn to release ourselves? Releasement is not something that we can describe, but it is something that we must patiently wait for:

> Teacher: Waiting, all right ; but never awaiting, for awaiting already links itself with re-presenting and what is re-presented.
>
> Scholar: Waiting, however, lets go of that; or rather I should say that waiting lets re-presenting entirely alone. It really has no object.
>
> Scientist: Yet if we wait we always wait for something.
>
> Scholar: Certainly, but as soon as we re-present to ourselves and fix upon that for which we wait, we really wait no longer. (DOT: 68; G: 42)

The emphasis here is on waiting without being able to express or explain what we are waiting for because that which we wait for does not originate from us. The setting in which the conversation takes place is also noteworthy, and helps make sense of the nature of this waiting. The participants of this dialogue are on a walk outside of human habitation, on a country path. If the journey has a clear destination or a purpose, it is not discussed, and it does not affect the flow of the conversation. Thus, waiting is a journey into something

nonhuman, something outside the realms of human representation that we cannot fully grasp and explain.

Thinking of releasement as waiting, as a journey outside the realm of human representation, now helps make sense of releasement. But at the same time, it makes it impossible to explain exactly what Heidegger means with this idea of releasement. Indeed, in 'Conversation on A Country Path', Heidegger's purpose is not to explain the meaning of releasement, but to allow this meaning to come to us through the dialogue. As Dalle Pezze (2006) explains, it is important to note that in the beginning of the dialogue, each participant speaks according to their own role: the scientist is attempting to grapple with the subject matter through a scientific inquiry, and the scholar through a more traditional philosophical viewpoint, whilst the teacher guides the two other participants towards meditative thinking. But at the end of the dialogue, the three thinkers have abandoned these roles and no longer speak through them. They no longer attempt to control the dialogue, but they allow the dialogue itself to guide their thinking (Dalle Pezze, 2006: 96).

As the three participants continue to reflect on what they are waiting for, the dialogue continues as follows:

> Teacher: In waiting we leave open what we are waiting for.
>
> Scholar: Why?
>
> Teacher: Because waiting releases itself into openness . . .
>
> Scholar: . . . into the expanse of distance . . .
>
> Teacher: ... in whose nearness it finds the abiding in which it remains. (DOT: 68; G: 42).

Here we can see that no one participant of the dialogue alone formulates the meaning of the waiting, but they allow its meaning to come to them. Heidegger's purpose here is not to explain the meaning of releasement but to describe the kind of questioning that can teach us

to release ourselves towards things. Releasement does not aim to describe or explain what this path looks like, but it attempts to show us how we might begin this kind of questioning. We can only grasp what releasement is when we ourselves begin this journey into the nonhuman.

Instead of manipulating beings as resources and trying to find out information about them, forming correct statements about beings, Heidegger is encouraging us to stay with things, to be open to their mystery, to bear their stillness (Stenstad, 2006: 120). This is the venturing into the foreign that Heidegger talked about when discussing how we can find our homeland, this is the kind of attitude that, in the end, allows us to find our dwelling place and to be at home. Here we can also see how Heidegger's thinking had developed even further from the time of the lecture course on 'Ister': he is even more reticent to name Being and to explain how he goes about questioning Being. In some ways, his language has become simpler, but at the same time, it has also become much harder to explain how Heidegger goes about questioning Being. This is why, to illustrate his thinking at this time, I had to resort to directly quoting lengthier segments of this work.

The claim that Heidegger made in the Memorial Address about not thinking of releasement in terms of activity and passivity must now also be understood differently. The reason why releasement cannot be understood in these terms is not that releasement can encourage both active and passive comportments towards beings but the reason is that releasement is not attempting to prescribe any kinds of comportments towards beings. So, thinking of releasement as behaving towards beings in a particular manner means to already take one step too far because releasement is not concerned with beings themselves. Instead of thinking about releasement as something that prescribes a certain way of behaving towards beings, we should think about it in terms of the journey towards our homeland. I will give more concrete

examples of this kind of an attitude in Chapters Five and Six where I explore in more detail what dwelling in the fourfold could look like.

Finally, to conclude this discussion of questioning *phusis* and of the relationship between protecting beings and questioning *phusis,* I would like to return to what Heidegger said about technology in 'Question Concerning Technology'. As has been explained in previous chapters, technological thinking was one of Heidegger's central concerns in his later writings: it is a kind of thinking that focuses on forming correct representations of beings, and forgets to question the truth of Being. When discussing technological thinking, Heidegger does seem to be interested in questioning the effects that technological thinking has on beings themselves. He explains in a famous passage how the way in which modern technology reveals nature makes unreasonable demands on the environment: 'a tract of land is challenged into the putting out of coal and ore. The earth now reveals itself as a coal mining district, the soil as a mineral deposit' (QCT: 14; FT: 15). So here it seems that the problems with technological thinking are understood in reference to the demands made on beings.

But could we start thinking of these demands as something that are not made on beings themselves? We can do this if we look closer at what Heidegger says about making demands in 'Question Concerning Technology'. After explaining how modern mining methods make demands on the environment, Heidegger moves on to describe how these demands are made. Demands are made as 'a tract of land is challenged into the putting out of coal and ore. The earth now *reveals* itself as a coal mining district, the soil as a mineral deposit.' (QCT: 14; FT: 15, emphasis mine). The use of the verb 'to reveal' is significant here. Heidegger is concerned with how the coal mine is revealed to us in a certain way, with how our environment is revealed to us. The unreasonable demand is made in reference to the coal mine being revealed as something which is to be controlled and used as a resource, not as something that will always remain mysterious and question-worthy. The demand is not made

on the coal mine itself, as a being, but it is made on *phusis* that is not allowed to unfold in its concealment.

Heidegger and Politics

These reflections on the development of Heidegger's thinking on the *polis*, and on letting be and releasement, now help us start thinking about what it means to protect nature when it is understood as questioning the unfolding of *phusis*, as something that is separate from protecting beings. So what does the journey towards our homeland and establishing the *polis* look like? As has been explained previously, I cannot give clear instructions concerning how we can learn to be at home or offer any kind of final word on what the *polis* is. But I can give some guidelines on how we can start to think about journeys towards home. Releasement is about belonging to the opening of our dwelling site, a site that we did not create, that we cannot represent or understand through technological thinking (Mugerauer, 2008: 470). To do this, we need to learn to stay with things, in their nearness, and be open to that which Being gives us to think. This, particularly in Heidegger's later writings, happens when we embark on our own journeys towards our homeland. As Skocz (2004: 303) explains when describing how rivers can help us find our homeland, the river 'leaves us to our own devices, to the journeying that is ours to take. That journeying will take us to our dwelling place, to where we are at home.' The journeying into the foreign and our coming to be at home, then, consists of our own questioning.

But the fact that Heidegger emphasises our own journeys of questioning towards the homeland does not mean that we are alone in this questioning. As can be recalled from the discussion of mitsein in Chapter Two, Dasein is never in the world alone but exists with other Dasein. The homeland, indeed, is what allows people and things to gather together, as a

community (Mugerauer, 2008: 521). However, as was explored in the second chapter, when we learn to dwell and, to use the language that Heidegger employed in *Being and Time*, to exist in the world authentically, we also learn to be with others in a more authentic way. Recognising the groundlessness of our ambitions and goals in life allows us to exist with others in a different manner, not imposing our goals and aims in life onto others. Ben-Dor (2007: 318) describes this way on being as follows: 'We are on the way together and in this togetherness; indeed, this togetherness calls to my own thinking and thinging. We are all hovering in time together, and when this togetherness calls and talks to our own innermost "how" we project our past onto the future'. This is not really an answer to the question of what the *polis* is, but it provides us with ways of questioning the *polis,* of thinking about how we can learn to dwell and be at home. All of this may still sound fairly abstract at this stage. I will, however, offer more concrete examples of what this kind of dwelling might look like in the next two chapters that follow.

Heidegger's thinking of the *polis* also allows us to start thinking about the role that questioning *phusis* could play in green thinking. As this chapter has demonstrated, our understanding of the political is still dependent on the *polis,* on how the truth of Being unfolds to us because this is what opens up the world where certain political opportunities and possibilities of acting present themselves to us. But the inexpressibility of the *polis* means that everything we can say about politics and about alternative ways of organising politics must remain provisional, we cannot undertake any task of re-organising the way we conduct politics as a result of questioning Being. Establishing the *polis* cannot be thought of in terms of organising and protecting beings, and it cannot have any environmental consequences.

Thinking of the *polis* as something that we must, in the end, remain silent about, thinking of it as a mysterious homecoming and being-with-others, might, at first, seem like something

detrimental for green politics because it now looks as if protecting nature is no longer a question of everyday politics at all. So how could we think about the role of green politics in the light of how the later Heidegger no longer thought of the statesmen as those who can encounter *phusis*? I do not want to begin answering this question by trying to rethink where we should locate political actions, by claiming that because the statesmen are now excluded from the sphere of the *polis,* Heidegger wants us to radically rethink the meaning of politics and wants us to start thinking of the very act of questioning *phusis* as a political act (e.g. Elden, 2000). This is because I am here inquiring about the concept of nature in green politics that is already implicitly present in green thinking. I am not interested in reinventing the meaning and the content of green politics. So how, then, can politics play a role in questioning *phusis* if we do not embark on a mission to reinvent the way we think about politics?

Although in Heidegger's later writings the statesmen are no longer those who can found the *polis* because this role is reserved for the poets and the thinkers, this does not exclude questioning *phusis* completely from the sphere of politics. Even if the statesmen themselves cannot bring about new ways of questioning *phusis*, this does not mean that Heidegger completely gave up thinking about politics in his later work. Lewis (2005) argues that towards the end of his life, Heidegger did begin to think that certain political systems would be better suited for questioning Being than others. In his interview with *Der Spiegel*, Heidegger says that 'the decisive question for me today is: how can a political system accommodate itself to the technological age, and which political system would this be?' (cited in Lewis, 2005: 176). At this point, then, thinking about the kind of political system that is able to overcome technological thinking was an important question for Heidegger. But how can this kind of questioning fit into thinking about *phusis*?

I think that politics can have a more important role in questioning Being than Heidegger himself recognised. This is because political structures can play an enabling role in us finding our paths towards questioning *phusis.* There are ways of organising politics that make it more difficult to question *phusis* and to resist technological thinking; there are ways of practising politics that encourage us to approach the world more in terms of technological thinking, in terms of numbers and resources. For example, although this was ignored by Heidegger, the global capitalist system and the neoliberal agenda that extends beyond the economic sphere, to areas such as health and education, encourage us to view all aspects of our lives as quantifiable resources that we can attach a price tag to (de Beistegui, 1998: 159-60, see also Kockelmans, 1984: 273-4; Lewis, 2007: ch 5). And conversely, we could find political practices that oppose these tendencies and can help us question *phusis.* So, politics cannot found a new beginning and cannot question Being, but it can still help us in overcoming technological thinking. The role of politics is not reinventing the way in which we live according to some preconceived idea of a new beginning, but political actions can help us reflect on how we can overcome technological thinking on our own. I will return to examples of the kinds of political actions that could encourage us to question *phusis* in Chapter Six.

This does not, however, solve all the problems and concerns present in Heidegger's description of the *polis*. Although Heidegger, in his later writings, arrived at a formulation of the *polis* that does not search for a unified destiny for a community, there is nevertheless a concern that a danger could lurk even in these individual journeys towards the homeland that we are encouraged to take. Firstly, there is still a concern, especially in the context of Heidegger's involvements with National Socialism, that Heidegger's homeland is established through excluding certain voices and experiences from it, by establishing a community that is homogenous. Secondly, Heidegger's accounts of dwelling and the homeland seem to exhibit a yearning for a non-technological rural past. The next chapter will address these concerns by

looking at the role that rural nostalgia plays in Heidegger's writings and at the extent to which cultures, for Heidegger, were homogenous.

Conclusion

This chapter has followed the arguments of the previous chapters, that the concept of nature plays an important role in green politics but the meaning of this concept is difficult to define, that Heidegger's philosophy can be useful in thinking about this concept but that the common green ways of thinking about nature in his philosophy as describing the unfolding of nonhuman environments end up in contradictions, and that nature should be understood as describing the unfolding of all things, not only of those things that are deemed as somehow nonhuman. This chapter has continued this discussion by looking at how we could protect nature if it is understood, not as the unfolding of nonhuman environments, but as describing how all beings appear to us as beings. The chapter has explored the links between protecting nature, understood as Heidegger's *phusis*, and preserving the environment. It has demonstrated that these two are not essentially linked. Despite the fact that Heidegger maintains we can question Being by letting beings be, questioning Being does not necessarily have any environmental consequences. This is because our understanding of beings is based on a violent encounter with *phusis.* The chapter also explored what it means to question *phusis* by looking at the idea of the homeland in Heidegger's writings, and at how we can think about questioning *phusis* as a journey towards our homeland, a journey that the statesmen cannot help us make but that can be guided by the poets and the thinkers. The chapter also explored how, although political actions themselves can never directly confront Being, they can play a part in questioning Being through establishing political structures that might make this task easier.

This way of questioning nature solves many of the problems in thinking about nature that have been discussed before. Because the concept of nature no longer describes the spontaneous growth and flourishing of nonhuman environments, we no longer have to explain how we can make the distinction between human and nonhuman environments. However, this still does not fully answer the question of what it means to protect nature. Although questioning nature is no longer associated with the practice of environmental politics, Heidegger's criticism of technology and his frequent use rural examples of how we might learn to dwell and question *phusis* still seem to advocate traditional, more 'natural' ways of doing things. His use of examples of dwelling in rural areas seem to suggest that he is privileging environments that we would conventionally think of as nonhuman and natural as sites for dwelling. It is easy for us now to start exploring how we might learn to dwell amidst apple trees, but what about learning to dwell with technological items? Could we learn to dwell, for example, with iphones? It is also unclear if Heidegger is able to accommodate different voices in the communities that are established as we begin to dwell. The next chapter moves on to examine these questions by looking in more detail at the kinds of places in which we can learn to dwell as we begin to question Being with the aim of demonstrating that dwelling does not imply a return to a traditional, homogenous culture where minority voices are silenced, and that we can dwell amidst technical devices. The concluding chapter will then look at how this way of thinking about nature can help us make better sense of green politics.

Chapter Five: Heidegger and Technology

Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis began by demonstrating how the concept of nature seems to communicate something important about green goals and how, at the same time, the meaning of this concept is difficult to articulate. Thinking of nature as referring to nonhuman environments is problematic because we exist in such interconnected networks with our environments that a large majority of the environments on Earth cannot be thought of as nonhuman. Chapter Two then turned to the philosophy of Heidegger in order to start thinking about this concept of nature. This chapter demonstrated why the mainstream green ways of thinking about nature in Heidegger's work as describing the spontaneous unfolding of nonhuman environments cannot hold and how nature in his work must refer to something else. Chapters Three and Four then went on to investigate the role that the concept of nature plays in Heidegger's thinking in more detail in order to understand how we should start thinking about nature in green politics. Chapter Three looked at how we cannot equate *phusis,* Heidegger's nature, with the nonhuman environment and his concealing earth with those aspects of the unfolding of our nonhuman environments that are concealed from us. Chapter Four explained how questioning *phusis* does not prescribe any particular kinds of attitudes towards beings themselves and does not automatically lead to environmentally friendly outcomes. Instead, protecting nature is about homecoming and learning to dwell, about understanding that we cannot represent and control beings. And so, these chapters presented a way of thinking about nature that overcomes problems in talking about nature as something nonhuman because it does not rely on drawing boundaries between human and nonhuman environments.

But although the previous chapters explained how Heidegger's thinking can allow us to start thinking about nature in a different manner, it is not yet clear if we have overcome all the problems in thinking about nature that were discussed in Chapter One. Although we no longer think of nature as the non-human environment, the idea of nature as something traditional or unchanged still seem to feature in Heidegger's accounts of dwelling. The way in which Heidegger talks about dwelling in the fourfold as rootedness and as a return to a Greek beginning seems to imply a return to older, more traditional ways of doing things and to communities that are culturally homogenous. The fact that Heidegger also frequently gives examples of how we might learn to dwell in rural areas suggests that, to an extent, he is still thinking of dwelling in terms of nonhuman environments. This way of thinking about nature, therefore, would not be much better than the more conventional way of thinking about nature because nature would still be an ideological mask hampering our discussion of politics. My aim in this chapter is to look closer at Heidegger's accounts of dwelling and technology in order to explain why these accounts do not imply that we should return to traditional, rural communities, why dwelling does not imply that we think of cultures as homogenous and how nature is not linked to preserving traditions. These investigations will also allow us to explore in more detail how we can learn to dwell and begin to question *phusis*.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section looks at the potential problems of thinking about dwelling in Heidegger's fourfold. The second section looks at the role of tradition in Heidegger's thinking in more detail and explores how his thinking of dwelling cannot be simply seen as advocating a return to older and more traditional ways of doing things, to closed traditional communities with homogenous understandings of how we can dwell in that community. The third section focuses on the role of technology in Heidegger's dwelling, and looks at how we can learn to dwell amidst technical devices. Finally, the fourth

section looks at how we can now apply the notion of dwelling to areas that we would not conventionally think of as natural and how we could begin to dwell in urban areas.

Problems with Dwelling

Although thinking of nature in terms of *phusis* helps us address some of the concerns we had about talking about nature, it is still unclear whether Heidegger's *phusis* can overcome all the problems in thinking about nature. His description of dwelling in the fourfold raises two concerns. First, Heidegger's calls for a god to save us from technological thinking by offering a new cultural paradigm seems to suggest that cultures are homogenous and dwelling in the fourfold is about recovering the one true, traditional, way of dwelling that a culture has. Dwelling and nature here seem to be associated with the idea of tradition that, as was discussed in Chapter One, is one common way of portraying something as natural. Furthermore, this way of dwelling would also be based on excluding dissenting voices from the dwelling place. These concerns are heightened through the way in which Heidegger talks about a return to our Greek heritage, and with how he privileges the German language as something that is particularly suited for describing the Greek experience of Being (see e.g. Miller, 1995: 252-3). There is a danger, then, that dwelling is governed by the idea of some natural, traditional existence to whose harmonies we must return to.

Second, there is a concern that the way Heidegger discusses dwelling suggests that for him, dwelling is about returning to some romanticised rural past, about dwelling environments that are seen as being somehow nonhuman. This concern arises because Heidegger frequently gives examples of how we might learn to dwell in rural areas, and he does not investigate how we could dwell amidst modern technical devices. Heidegger's criticism of technological thinking seems to suggest that the only way to resist this kind of thinking is to get rid of

technical devices and to return to some pre-technological era (e.g. Feenberg, 1999). Thus, the cultural paradigm we are supposed to recover would lead us to some traditional, pre-technological way of life, and environments that we conventionally think of as being shaped by man less would now be privileged in dwelling.

The problems that arise when we begin to approach dwelling in this manner can be seen, for example, in Ingold's (1993) adoption of Heidegger's dwelling. Ingold explores how places can become important to us by analysing Bruegel's painting *The Harvester*. At the centre of this painting there is a pear tree around which people are harvesting. In the background of the painting we can also see a stone church. Ingold (1993: 169) explains how the stone church in the painting allows us to dwell just like the trees next to the church allow us to dwell:

> Like the tree, the church by its very presence constitutes a place, which owes its character to the unique way in which it draws in the surrounding landscape. Again like the tree, the church spans human generations, yet its temporality is not inconsonant with that of human dwelling. As the tree buries its roots in the ground, so also people's ancestors are buried in the graveyard beside the church, and both sets of roots may reach to approximately the same temporal depth. Moreover the church, too, resonates to the cycles of human life and subsistence. Among the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, it is not only seen but also heard, as its bells ring out the seasons, the months, births, marriages and deaths. In short, as features of the landscape, both the church and the tree appear as veritable monuments to the passage of time.

Although Ingold is giving an example of how we can dwell amongst things that have been made by humans and are not part of a nonhuman nature, his interpretation of dwelling still retains some of the problems associated with thinking about nature that were discussed in Chapter One.

Although the church that Ingold describes has been built by humans, it is not a modern technological item but it has been built with materials that some might consider as nonhuman and as natural. Ingold is also talking about dwelling as something that is very closely linked to one particular place where people can find a unified paradigm to help them make sense of their lives. Thus, the church can be seen as a traditional, natural item, something around

which we can gather to learn to live with the natural harmonies of the local traditions. As Hinchliffe (2003: 220) explains, Ingold's emphasis on these local qualities of dwelling leads him to place too much emphasis on rootedness in particular local landscapes. Describing how the stone church allows people to make sense of births, marriages and deaths also highlights the homogenous, traditional values that make the lives of the peasant significant, and produces an image of a peaceful and harmonious existence with these values. There is, then, a danger that Heidegger's description of dwelling is creating an ahistorical account of what it means to dwell in the world, one that is rooted in tradition and 'natural' ways of doing things (Bender, 1998: 37), unable to touch upon how places are always changing, always in flux. This way of approaching the concept of dwelling can, as explained by Urry (2000), prohibit us from thinking how we are not rooted in any kind of homogenous, harmonious traditions, how many tightly knit communities 'are characterised both by highly unequal local social relations […] and by hostility to those on the outside' (Urry, 2000: 140). There, then, does not exist one, harmonious way for people to exist together, but even these local traditions are characterised by contestations and exclusions, and it is not yet clear how Heidegger's account of dwelling can address these exclusions. These concerns also become more pertinent in the light of Heidegger's engagements with National Socialism in the 1930s.

Similar problems can be observed in the examples of engaging with apples in ways that resist technological thinking which have been given throughout the thesis. Although it has been established that apples are not a part of any nonhuman nature, the examples of dwelling with apples that I have given so far have involved walking in gardens and baking apple pies. These examples have not involved modern technology but apples, that are conventionally understood as being somehow natural, and have contained depictions harmonious and pleasant gatherings with friends in an attempt to recover, perhaps, some sense of pre-technological gatherings. Thus, we can observe a yearning for some older, traditional ways of

consuming and engaging with apples in these examples. These problems that we encounter in thinking about what it means to dwell can, however, be overcome, and dwelling does not only have to be understood in terms of Ingold's stone church or in terms of baking apple pies. In the sections that follow, I will explore in more detail how we can begin to look at Heidegger's dwelling in a way that is not subject to these problems, and look for ways of thinking about dwelling that go beyond eating apples.

Homogenous Paradigm

To start thinking about whether Heidegger's understanding of dwelling necessarily leads to the kinds of problems discussed above, I am going to begin by looking at if Heidegger thought of cultures as something homogenous and unchanging. After this, I will move on to examine the role of nonhuman environments and technology in dwelling. As explained in this chapter's introduction, Heidegger's talk of a god offering a paradigm for us to make sense of the world has, in particular, been identified as a problematic aspect of his account of dwelling. These references to a god seem to demonstrate that Heidegger believed that cultures are homogenous, that learning to dwell and coming to be at home would entail the exclusion of others who do not fit into our understanding of what it means to be at home.

Some have, however, explored how we can interpret Heidegger's calls for a new god differently, in a way that does not lead us to view cultures as homogenous and static. Dreyfus (2000: 330) suggests that the way in which the later Heidegger talks about the gods and dwelling departs from the way in which Heidegger articulated the role of the gods in 'Origins of the Work of Art'. In 'Origins of the Work of Art', the work of art was a cultural paradigm that 'articulates or rearticulates the culture's understanding of being by embodying the cultural heritage' (Dreyfus, 2000: 330). But in his later work, Heidegger is no longer calling

for a god to save us. Instead, he is calling for a plurality of gods to appear in the fourfold: 'when things shine, a god (one of many) attunes mortals to the current situation by means of his or her local authority […] The job of these gods is getting mortals in tune with their current world' (Dreyfus, 2000: 330). Heidegger, talking about the role of a plurality of gods in dwelling, demonstrates that he no longer thinks of dwelling as something based on closed communities with one cultural paradigm but instead, there are different, competing gods. This means that we can never talk about a community's understanding of Being because there are always different ways of revealing things, different ways in which beings can appear to us as beings. Any community must always think about how to deal with these differences.

Indeed, as Vaden explains, thinking of cultures as heterogeneous is something that is required for overcoming technological thinking:

> The heterogeneity of experiential traditions is a direct consequence of the fact that identity is not grounded on a fundament, a thinking substance or hung upon a transcendental structure. […] locality suffers also if the network is homogenized in the name of experiential purity, intensity and strong roots (Vaden: 2004: 421).

An emphasis on heterogenous traditions and contestations within these traditions is needed to overcome the idea that we can somehow understand the traditions we are embedded in. We cannot explain the essence of our dwelling place but it is something that we can experience as we learn to dwell, as the four elements of the fourfold come to be gathered together (see Young, 2000: 202-203). So, Heidegger may have believed that Germans had a privileged access to the way in which Greeks understood *phusis*, a claim that Vaden explains that we, as non-native German speakers who do not have access to this tradition, must take on faith (Vaden, 2004: 418). But this does not have to mean that cultures, for Heidegger, are homogenous and that they are not open to contestation. Although he is talking about traditions and how we are embedded in these traditions, this does not imply that cultures always remain static and unchanging. To be with others in our homeland entails including

others in our way of dwelling, allowing our practices and ways of being to change and evolve.

It is also important to note here that Heidegger's dwelling place is not demarcated through establishing definable borders and excluding others from dwelling through these kinds of practices. These practices would, again, belong to technological thinking (see Elden, 2008). This was already explored in Chapter Three when the importance of place in Heidegger's thinking was being discussed: places, for Heidegger, cannot be thought of as occupying any pre-given spaces and they cannot be thought of as having definable boundaries. Instead, they come into being as we begin to dwell in them.

Another way of approaching this would be to concentrate on the activity of dwelling and on what it contains. This is illustrated by Rose (2012) who explains that dwelling is not only about having a particular kind of comportment towards the world but dwelling is also about acting in the world and shaping it. As was already discussed in the previous chapter, our encounter with *phusis* is a violent encounter, we do not work in harmony with the unfolding *phusis* but we shape the world in which we live ourselves: we always find ourselves in the world amidst traditions that give meaning to our lives. This means that we do not passively encounter the world but actively shape it, we build places as we dwell in them. Heidegger discusses this in *Building Dwelling Thinking* by describing dwelling as a building: 'The Old English and High German word for building, *buan,* means to dwell. This signifies: to remain, to stay in a place. The real meaning of the verb *bauen* [the German word for 'to build'] has been lost to us' (BDT: 144; BWD: 148, emphasis original). Heidegger also notes how 'bauen' is related to the words 'bin' and 'bist', the first and second singular forms of the German verb 'to be'. The way that humans are in the world, then, is a kind of building (BDT: 145; BWD: 148). Heidegger explains:

> This word *bauen* also means to cherish and protect, to preserve, and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine. Shipbuilding and temple-building, on the other hand, do in a certain way make their own works. Here building, in contrast with cultivating, is a constructing. Both modes of building […] are comprised within genuine building, that is, dwelling (BDT: 145; BWD: 149).

Through this building, through taking care of and shaping our environments, we give rise to new ways of doing things, new norms and new traditions that continue to shape the world of others: '[w]e do not dwell because we have built, we build and have built because we dwell, that is, because we are dwellers' (BDT: 146; BWD: 150, emphasis original).

Paying attention to Heidegger's references to the plurality of gods also allows for a different way of interpreting what he said about returning to a Greek beginning. This return does not mean a return to Greek culture, but it means keeping in mind that the Western way of being-in-the-world will always be conditioned by the Greek world. As Phillips (2005: 171-2; see also Risser, 2012: 33) explains, for Heidegger, the Germans, through the encounter with the Greeks, are to become something other than Greeks, they will come to be at home in their own historical traditions which are not the same as those of the Greeks. We can never fully reconcile our complicated historical heritage, the heritage created through our encounters with others. New ways of existing in the world are always born out of these different kinds of encounters. Although our way of being-in-the-world is always dependent on what came before, we cannot simply return to what once was. Dwelling does not have to be about traditional ways of doing things in close-knit communities. But if this is the case, then why does Heidegger make frequent references to dwelling amidst non-technical items, why do his descriptions of dwelling seem to describe traditional ways of doing things? To understand this, I shall now move to investigate these references to things that we would conventionally consider natural which Heidegger makes when he discusses dwelling.

Rural Utopias

As can be seen in the examples Heidegger gave on dwelling which have been discussed throughout the thesis, he thought about dwelling primarily in terms of rural areas. Part of the reason that he gave these kinds of examples can be found in his background. Heidegger was not born in a city, but in the small village of Messkirch. He returned there throughout his life, and spent a lot of his time in a small forest hut where he could work without electricity and running water (see Sharr, 2006). This is how Heidegger describes the surroundings of the forest hut:

> On the steep slope of a wide mountain valley in the southern Black Forest, at an elevation of 1150 metres, there stands a small ski hut. The floor plan measures six metres by seven. The low-hanging roof covers three rooms: the kitchen which is also the living room, a bedroom and a study. Scattered at wide intervals throughout the narrow base of the valley and on the equally steep slope opposite, lie the farmhouses with their large over-hanging roofs. Higher up the slope the meadows and pasture lands lead to the woods with its dark fir-trees, old and towering (WSP: 27).

Heidegger cherished the rhythm of the life in the hut that allowed him to experience the landscape and its 'hourly changes, day and night, in the great comings and goings of the seasons' (WSP: 27).

Malpas (2007: 314) explains Heidegger's usage of these rural, or 'natural', examples of dwelling through his background, explaining that Heidegger's thinking of Being is taking place in those places in which he himself was rooted. This means Heidegger's privileging of the rural and supposedly natural environments when describing dwelling does not imply that we cannot learn to dwell in other areas as well. But although this can explain some of his rural nostalgia, I think that there is more to this. This becomes evident particularly through the remarks that Heidegger makes about the role that modern technology and urban environments play in dwelling. He was concerned that people who live in the fast-paced city are unable to experience dwelling: 'a very loud and very active and fashionable obtrusiveness

often passes itself off as concern for the world and existence of the peasant (WSP: 29). He was worried of the damage that this urban population might cause to the rural lifestyles:

> But nowadays many people from the city, the kind of who "know their way around" and not least of all the skiers, often behave in the village or at the farmer's house in the same way "have fun" at their recreation centres in the city (WSP: 29).

Heidegger also explores the threat that modern technology makes to our ability to dwell when giving a talk on the 700-year anniversary of Messkirch. Here he maintains that with the emergence of modern technology and radio- and television antennas on people's houses, the inhabitants of Messkirch can no longer be at home (RZ: 575-6). So it seems, then, that Heidegger believed that modern technical devices would make dwelling impossible.

In the paragraphs that follow, I am going to think in more detail about the relationship between technology and dwelling, and explore whether dwelling has to take place in the context of non-technological things. I will explore how, although Heidegger himself may have been prejudiced against modern technology and urban environments, we can nevertheless use his philosophy to think about dwelling with technological items. I will thus demonstrate that we can overcome rural nostalgia when thinking about dwelling.

Returning to what Heidegger had to say about technology in 'Question Concerning Technology' is helpful for this inquiry. A closer reading of 'Question Concerning Technology' reveals that Heidegger is not, in fact, interested in describing technological items themselves when he is questioning the essence of technology. Heidegger explains that 'Above all through our catching sight of what comes to presence in technology, instead of merely staring at the technological. So long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain fast in the will to master it' (QCT: 32; FT: 40). Instead of questioning technical devices, Heidegger is interested in asking about something different: 'The question concerning technology is the question concerning the constellation in which revealing and

concealing, in which the coming to presence of truth, comes to pass.' (QCT, 33; FT: 41). So he thinks about technological thinking as a particular way of revealing beings, and he is interested in questioning how technological thinking allows beings to appear to us as particular kinds of beings.

This means that Heidegger, in questioning the essence of technology, is asking about the way in which technological thinking reveals things to us today. He is not asking about the qualities of technological items themselves and he is not describing some enduring properties of technological things (Rojcewicz, 2006: 12). Thomson (2000: 437) thus explains that, yes, for Heidegger, technical things show up in a particular kind of way, as resources to be manipulated and used. However, this is not because technical devices have particular essences that require these devices to always show themselves to us in a particular way, because technical devices have essences that lead us always to see these devices and anything associated with them as resources. Instead, technical devices are seen as resources because today, revealing is governed by technological thinking, and '*everything* in the contemporary world will show up for us as reflecting the essence of technology, technological devices included' (Thomson, 2000: 437, emphasis original). If things in the future come to be revealed to us in a different way, then everything, including technical devices, could start showing up to us differently as well.

So although Heidegger criticised technological thinking, he was not advocating a return to some rural past, and we cannot simply think of him as someone who wanted to return to a more traditional way of practising and doing things. Indeed, in *Discourse on Thinking* Heidegger explains how using technological devices does not automatically condemn us to technological thinking:

> For all of us, the arrangements, devices, and machinery of technology are to a greater or lesser extent indispensable. It would be foolish to attack technology blindly. It would be shortsighted to condemn it as

> the work of the devil. We depend on technical devices they even challenge us to ever greater advances (DOT: 53, G: 22).

Our modern way of life depends technological devices and therefore, we should not abandon them and should not fully condemn the kind of thinking that brought us these devices. Instead, Heidegger proposes an alternative attitude towards the use of these technologies:

> We can use technical devices, and yet with proper use also keep ourselves so free of them, that we may let go of them any time. We can use technical devices as they ought to be used, and also let them alone as something which does not affect our inner and real core. We can affirm the unavoidable use of technical devices, and also deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse, and lay waste our nature (DOT: 54; G: 22-3).

The task for us in thinking about how we could resist technological thinking, then, is not to think about how we could live our lives in ways that would utilise technology as little as possible. Instead, the task is to think about how we can continue to engage with technical items in ways that still allow room for dwelling and for questioning *phusis,* how we could learn to engage with these technical devices in such ways that we 'deny them the right to dominate us, and so to warp, confuse and lay waste our nature' (Heidegger, cited in Dreyfus, 2002: 167).

But what kind of role could these technological devices continue to play in our lives? I will explore this by returning to Dreyfus and Spinosa and look at how they see the role that technology could play in dwelling in the fourfold. For Dreyfus and Spinosa, dwelling allows for resisting technological thinking because it allows us to think of things as something other than resources, because it allows us to be gathered by things when these things 'pull our practices together and draw us in we experience a focusing and a nearness that resists technological ordering' (Dreyfus, 1995: 162). As explored in previous chapters, in Dreyfus and Spinosa's interpretation, the earth of the fourfold refers to those background practices that are not intelligible to us but that nevertheless ground our everyday dealings with the

world. The sky refers to those actions and ways of behaving that we feel are appropriate in a given moment. The divinities refer to the reverential sentiment that arises when 'one feels grateful for receiving all that is brought out by this particular occasion', when one feels in tune with what is happening and is grateful for the gift that one has received (Dreyfus and Spinosa, 1997: 167). The mortals describe how we can learn to resist the totalising practices of technology, how we cannot adopt a totalising understandings of beings. Instead, beings can now appear to us in different ways as we adopt different identities and as the fourfold gathers together in different ways. Dreyfus and Spinosa (2003: 344) thus explain that 'the gathering of people around things such as a jug of wine or a family meal resists the totalising and dispersing effects of the efficient ordering demanded by the technicity'. So what role could technical devices continue to play as we learn to dwell?

To demonstrate that it is indeed possible to begin to dwell amidst technical devices, Dreyfus and Spinosa draw attention to the fact that for Heidegger, modern technological devices can also gather the fourfold into things. Dreyfus and Spinosa explain how, in 'Building Dwelling Thinking' (151-2; BWD: 152-3), Heidegger gives three examples of bridges that can gather the fourfold together. The two first examples are from pre-technological eras. Heidegger gives an example of a bridge in a small country village that allows for the passage of horses and wagons. He also gives an example of a medieval stone bridge that leads from the castle to the cathedral square. But surprisingly, Heidegger also talks about a highway bridge, the purpose of which is to connect highways together in order to provide easy and efficient transportation for cars. And importantly, he does not think that the highway bridge is radically different from the two other types of bridges: he does not think that it is impossible for the fourfold to be gathered into this bridge and he does not think that it is impossible for us to learn to dwell on the highway bridge (Dreyfus and Spinosa, 1997: 169-70).

So, what kind of role can these technological things play in dwelling and how could they be a part of coming together of the fourfold? Dreyfus and Spinosa argue that dwelling on the highway bridge is a different kind of dwelling from the dwelling that takes place on the old stone bridge or on the village bridge. Drawing attention to how Heidegger claims that the gods cannot present in the highway bridge because they have been pushed aside, Dreyfus and Spinosa argue that dwelling on the highway bridge is not the kind of dwelling where we can feel in tune with what is happening around us and be grateful for the gift of dwelling (Dreyfus and Spinosa, 1997: 170). Nevertheless, we cannot ignore that for Heidegger, some form of dwelling is taking place on the highway bridge.

To think about what kind of dwelling this could be, Dreyfus and Spinosa go on to propose that technical devices play an important part in allowing us to dwell because they can allow us to navigate between different kinds of non-technical worlds. To illustrate, Dreyfus and Spinosa explain:

> For there is room in such interconnecting worlds not only for a joyful family dinner, writing to a life-long friend, and attending the local concert but also for surfing on the Internet and happily zipping around an autobahn cloverleaf in tune with technology and glad that one is open to the possibilities of connecting with each of these worlds and many others (Dreyfus and Spinosa, 1997: 174).

In a similar manner, we could think of an electrical oven as something that plays an important part of an autumnal gathering of eating a homemade apple pie. The oven itself facilitates the baking of the pie, making it possible for the gathering to take place. At the same time, the oven does not make it impossible for the fourfold to gather together, it does not prohibit the earth from unfolding as those background practices that bring friends together in the autumn, it does not prohibit the sky from manifesting itself as the different possibilities of acting that are appropriate in such occasions, and it does not prohibit the appearance of the gods in the gathering. Thus, Dreyfus and Spinosa argue that we can use technological devices to an extent while not being completely overtaken by technological thinking. We can question

Being if we use technological devices as tools which help us navigate through different kinds of worlds that allow for the gathering of these local practices.

But this account of technology is still somewhat problematic. I am here going to draw on Vaden's criticism of Dreyfus and Spinosa to explain why this is so. Vaden explains that Dreyfus and Spinosa still have a universal account of technology – technical things always appear to us in a particular way, always require us to engage with them in a certain manner (Vaden, 2002: 423). Although we can begin to dwell amidst technical devices, in Dreyfus and Spinosa's account, there is still a particular role played by technical things themselves, technical things occupy a certain role in our lives by virtue of being technical. Dreyfus and Spinosa (1997: 177), indeed, explicitly state that 'a device is not neutral; it affects the possibilities that show up for us'. This view, however, contradicts the fact that for Heidegger, the essence of technology did not describe any permanently enduring properties of technical devices themselves. Because of this, reserving a special role in dwelling for these devices by virtue of them being technical is problematic.

But reflecting on these difficulties that arise when we try to think of technological items themselves as problematic makes it difficult for us to find a way of talking about technological devices. This is because even if we do not want to say that there is some particular, permanently enduring essence of technology, it seems that a special place is reserved for technical things in dwelling. They seem somehow destructive to me and I think they encourage us to view things in the world only in terms of resources and efficiency. The medieval stone bridge seems to be different in character from the busy and noisy highway bridge that we cross hurriedly. And Heidegger also seems to acknowledge the special role that technological items play in dwelling when he explains that the divinities are not present as we dwell on the highway bridge. So how could we start thinking about dwelling with these technical devices?

As has already been explored in previous chapters, Dreyfus' interpretation of technological thinking stems from his particular reading of Heidegger: for Dreyfus, Heidegger's Being refers to those shared background practices that allow beings to appear to us as intelligible beings. In this thesis I have, however, argued that instead of thinking of Being as these background practices, we should think about Being as that which allows for the emergence of these practices. So, to understand the role that technical devices play in dwelling and to go beyond Drefyus' account of technological thinking, it might be useful to start thinking of ways of going beyond the practices that surround technical devices and start looking at what gives rise to these practices in the first place.

Vaden (2004) offers a way of going about this by suggesting that we should not be concentrating on technical practices themselves but we should look at the ways of being-in-the-world that have made possible their existence. He does this by explaining how certain kinds of technologies cannot exist alongside certain ways of being-in-the-world because in some circumstances, adopting a particular technology would also require that beings are revealed through technological thinking. As an example, Vaden turns to Dreyfus' own example of Japanese tea ceremony and highlights that a Japanese tea ceremony could not be conducted with a polystyrene cup. We cannot claim that technical devices have some universal properties but what we can say, as put by Vaden (2002: 231, emphasis original), is that 'from the point of view our way of living, *that* particular technology destroys its possibility'. In relation a particular local world, adopting one particular kind of technology would require us to abandon our old lifestyles and succumb to technological thinking, seeing things and ourselves in terms of resources.

Vaden's interpretation of Heidegger and technology also guides towards a different way of understanding the example of dwelling on the highway bridge that Heidegger gives in 'Building Dwelling Thinking'. If we look closer at how Heidegger describes the gathering of

the fourfold into different kinds of bridges and at why he claims that the gods are absent from dwelling on the highway bridge, it begins to look as if, contrary to what Dreyfus and Spinosa claim, Heidegger is not saying that the gods cannot be present in technical things:

> The highway bridge is tied into the network of long-distance traffic, paced as calculated for maximum yield. Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and from, so that they may get to other banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side. […] The bridge *gathers,* as a passage that crosses, before the divinities - whether we explicitly think of, and visibly *give thanks for,* their presence, as in the figure of the saint of the bridge, or whether that divine presence is obstructed or even pushed wholly aside (BDT, 151-2; BWD: 153,emphasis original).

Heidegger here does not say that the gods are always absent from dwelling on the bridge but he says that they are absent because they have been pushed aside. So, the divine presence may be absent from the bridge because it has been pushed aside, but for us to be able to push aside this divine presence, it must have existed there in the first place. As Thomson (2000: 238) elaborates:

> Heidegger is attempting to get us to notice the presence of the divinities which linger in the background of even our most advanced technological constructions. When he refers to the presence of the divine, Heidegger is evoking those meanings which cannot be explained solely in terms of human will, encouraging us to attend to that pre-conceptual phenomenological presencing upon which all of our interpretations rest.

Heidegger's account of the bridge and of the divinities suggests that the bridge is not just something we use to commute from place to place as efficiently as possible, but even the highway bridge is partly concealed by the earth. Paying attention to this concealment instead of just quickly driving along the bridge could allow for the appearance of the divinities and for dwelling on the bridge.

This way of approaching technological items now avoids the problems present in Dreyfus and Spinosa's account of technology. Technology no longer has any cross-cultural, universalist essence, technical devices can appear to us in different ways through different ways of being-in-the-world, and technical devices can still be something that allow us to

dwell. Rather than technological devices themselves being something inherently problematic, the problem is with the way in which we sometimes use these devices, in the way we often push the divinities aside when engaging with them.

But what would the role that technological devices play in dwelling look like now? In some ways, the new interpretation of this role is less permissive than Dreyfus and Spinosa's interpretation, in some cases it can lead us to conclude that a particular kind of technology just cannot exist alongside a particular lifestyle. Certain technologies cannot exist in certain contexts, not even as tools that allow us to connect with other local worlds. The Japanese tea ceremony cannot be conducted with a polystyrene cup. And in the case of the apple, for example, it would be difficult to celebrate the apple harvest in the autumn if we did not grow our own apples but bought these apples from the supermarket. But in some other ways, this way of thinking about technology can end up being more permissive than Dreyfus and Spinosa's account and can allow for more technology in dwelling. This holds true in particular in the Western context that we are interested in exploring here. So how is this?

We can start thinking about this if we remember that cultures, for Heidegger, are not static and homogenous, that he called for a plurality of gods to allow us to dwell in the fourfold. So if the way in which we dwell can evolve, this could also mean that technical items themselves can signify something more than just objects that allow us to efficiently order our lives and live them to maximum efficiency. For example, if we begin to use the dishwasher during family meals, then the dishwasher can become one of the things which allow for the gathering of the fourfold and allow us to dwell during a family meal. The sound of the dishwasher, for example, can become a familiar sound, playing a part in the happening of the family meal. Similarly, using the electrical oven can become a part of the event of sharing apples in the autumn which allows the gathering together of the fourfold, allows us to let beings be and allows for releasement. So this would mean that in some instances, technical

devices can begin to play a more positive role in dwelling than was suggested by Dreyfus and Spinosa. This also means that it is not only the old stone church that can provide a setting for dwelling, but a newly-build church could play this role as well.

These reflections also provide an answer to the question that was posed earlier: do those things that we conventionally think of as natural play some privileged role in dwelling, can we learn to dwell amidst iphones just as we can learn to dwell in a quiet garden amidst apple trees? The answer to this question depends on the kinds of ways of being-in-the-world that engaging with these technological items in particular circumstances require and not on the technological nature of particular items. Because we often use iphones as resources, as items that we can use to contact others as quickly and as efficiently as possible, these phones are usually used when things in the world are revealed to us through technological thinking and when we have not learned to dwell in the world. A walk in a quiet garden, however, is often encountered through different ways of being-in-the-world. When we are taking a walk amidst apple trees, we do not always do this for the sake of efficiency, for the sake of picking and growing apples as efficiently as possible. However, there is nothing in the iphone itself that makes it impossible for us to start treating it differently and makes it impossible for us to see it as something other than a resource. Instead of just using the iphone as a tool for efficiently contacting people, we could start reflecting on how the phone appears to us as an iphone, how it gathers together friends and how it becomes a part of our encounter with others. Thinking of the iphone in this manner would require that we change the way in which we interact with it, that we would no longer think of it as a tool to distract us from whatever is happening around us and to organise our lives as efficiently as possible.

So now we are ready to think about dwelling in a way that overcomes technological thinking but, at the same time, does not succumb to nostalgia. Finding our homeland and staying with things is not a return to a culturally homogenous or a pre-technological

homeland. It is about acknowledging that we cannot understand what beings mean to us, we cannot represent beings with numbers, and we cannot organise and optimise our lives in order to make everything run at maximum efficiency. Instead of engaging with things through technological thinking, we are now encouraged to engage with them through *techne* that, as was explained in the previous chapter, describes bringing Being to stand in beings when we recognise that we alone are not completely in charge of the process of making and manufacturing things. When we are engaging with things through *techne,* we allow for the unfolding of *phusis* and *techne* together (Brogan, 2006: 44).

There are, however, no clear guidelines that can allow us to reliably distinguish between technological and non-technological ways of interacting with our environments. Heidegger does not provide us with a checklist that allows for distinguishing between a way of farming apples that can be deemed industrial and a way of farming apples that does not make demands on the environment. Both of these farming methods still require the use of tools and require that we shape the environment for the purpose of growing apples. As O'Brien (2011: 102) explains, '[i]n a way, the question will always resist any attempt to demarcate things rigidly – there will always be a penumbra where it is not yet clear if the transition has already been made'. Indeed, seeking principles to allow us to reliably distinguish between these two would still be a part of technological thinking. But this does not mean that the differences in kind between these different ways of interacting with our environments do not exist. What Heidegger encourages us to do is to question different ways of shaping and interacting with them.

Urban Dwelling

This exploration into the role on technology in Heidegger's thinking demonstrates that his account of dwelling can be used to think about us learning to dwell amidst modern technical devices. Dwelling does not have to be seen as advocating a return to some rural past or embracing older, traditional ways of doing things. In this section, I will explore what this way of dwelling could look like in more practical terms. If technical devices can play a role in dwelling, then there is room to start thinking of the places in which we dwell differently. We can go beyond Dreyfus' suggestions of dwelling in the fourfold, we can go beyond 'practices such as friendship, backpacking into the wilderness, and drinking the local wine with friends' (Dreyfus, 2002: 171). So we can start looking for ways of dwelling not only in the forest or when eating local food, but also in areas which we do not usually think of as natural or as traditional. In this section, I will investigate this idea further by looking at how the notion of dwelling could be applied to urban areas. This exploration into urban dwelling remains, however, limited. The purpose of the section is not to investigate urban dwelling in great detail but rather, to demonstrate that Heidegger's dwelling can be used to explore how we can dwell in the urban.

There have been attempts to think about how Heidegger's account of dwelling in the fourfold could be extended to describe urban forms of dwelling. Malpas (2012) suggests that when we think about dwelling in a Heideggerian sense, it is important that we do not get caught up in this urban/rural distinction because this is not what is central to Heidegger's argument. The focus of our inquiry should, instead, be on looking for this sense of dwelling, both in urban and in rural areas. Heidegger, Malpas elaborates, prefers the rural because he wants quietness, he wants to stay with things. But this does not exclude urban environments from dwelling because similar kinds of opportunities for staying with things can be found in the city, albeit in different forms (Malpas, 2012). Villela-Petit (1996: 138), in a similar vein,

thinks that although Heidegger himself did not concentrate on cities, new forms of dwelling can emerge from the contemporary urban experiences:

> [H]eidegger refused to experience the city, no doubt seeing in cosmopolitanism and cultural pluralism nothing but a rootlessness which might be captured in the expression "the desert extends" […] [W]ithout minimising the defects of the cities and their degradation of our civilisation, can one not also see therein the crucible of unique experience, of that of a plural society in which a new consciousness of self and of humanity may eventually emerge?

So where in cities could we, then, find opportunities for staying with things? Where can we find these experiences of place in the urban that can make us feel at home and how could we learn to dwell in a city?

A lot of accounts on place-formation in the urban focus on the multiplicity of networks that make up urban spaces and emphasise the instability of these places (see e.g. Amin, 2002; Anderson *et al.* 2012; Massey, 2011; Massey, 1999). But while it is important to pay attention to these networks, we should not completely deny the existence of relatively stable places in the urban. Casey (2001, see also Pratt, 1999; Wunderlich, 2010) cautions against paying too much attention to these interconnections at the expense of ignoring the places that can still be formed through them. Places may become increasingly uniform 'without […] ceasing to exist altogether as places for us – places in which we orient ourselves and feel at home'. He gives an example:

> The proliferation of movies on video – in itself a proliferation of virtual space – has not meant the end of public movie theatres, but has appeared to intensify the desirability of such theatres as real places with their own sensuous density and interpersonal interest (Casey, 2001: 685).

Yi-Fu Tuan, for example, illustrates how something we can only come feel homely in cities as follows:

> This profound attachment to the homeland appears to be a worldwide phenomenon. It is not limited to any particular culture and economy. It is known to literate and nonliterate peoples, hunter-gatherers, and sedentary farmers, as well as city dwellers. The city or land is viewed as mother, and it nourishes; place is an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present (Tuan, 1977: 154).

Nevell and MaCann (2005:280) discuss, in a similar manner, how we can find pockets in the city, large or small, where we can settle down and feel at home. It is these pockets where we can learn to feel at home that we can think of in terms of Heidegger's dwelling. Even if we cannot learn to know the whole city, certain parts of it can become familiar to us. Furthermore, we constantly work and shape the cities in which we live: cities do not present us with a stable environment, but we actively shape cities as we live and work in them. Star (1990: 328), for example, demonstrates how work done on infrastructure in cities is always incremental, never finished once and for all. The familiarity that we have with places we interact with frequently also allow us to develop a sense of place and a sense of belonging:

> Today, we can see how the anonymous encounter on the city crossroads, on the subway, on the bus, or in the lunchtime plaza where street vendors sell pretzels and chili dogs forges from a multicultural conglomeration of strangers some genuine sense of place and community (Barber, 2002: 200).

So a similar sense of belongingness can be found in cities as in rural areas.

MacFarlane (2011) explains how this kind of belongingness and sense of a place in the urban can be thought of in terms of Heidegger's dwelling. MacFarlane explains how, in the city, people can begin to dwell as they 'draw upon previous experience or memories, and the multiple temporalities and rhythms of the city itself help to shape the possibilities of leaning through dwelling, from rhythms of day and night, to capitalist cycles of growth, collapse, shrinkage and decay, to the rhythms of long-term migration' (MacFarlane, 2011: 23). So we could also find a place to dwell in the city by learning to stay with the things we encounter, and we can also learn to be at home in an urban environment. These reflections on how we might begin to dwell in the urban through gaining a sense of home in places that are familiar to us allow for moving beyond the example of the apple when thinking about dwelling. Although the thesis began by considering what makes the apple natural, it is now time to explore how this idea of naturalness stretches beyond anything that we might conventionally

consider as natural, and how we could find opportunities for dwelling in urban environments. I am going to look at commuting to work in a crowded train as an example of this.

Unlike the earlier examples of dwelling that I have given, commuting to work on a crowded train does not describe any kind of peaceful existence with our surroundings, but it takes place amidst hurried travellers, often in noisy and crowded environments. Neither is the journey an example of existing in some kind of harmony with our environments. The way in which we shape the urban environment as we commute to work might be conflictual; we can be part of a gentrification process pricing existing inhabitants of the areas we live in out of their homes. Tensions can also arise in the form of increasing ticket prices and property prices that may force us to move further away from our work and have longer commuting times. But nevertheless, we can think about dwelling in the fourfold in an environment such as this. The train carriage in which we travel to work can be thought of as an example of the kind of familiar place that can allow us to dwell. So where can we locate the fourfold in this example of a train journey?

To begin to dwell during the rush-hour commute, we would have to stop thinking of the commute as a mere resource. We can accomplish this if we do not just think of this journey as something that we have to undertake in order to get to work in the most efficient manner possible, playing with our iphones in an effort to distract us from what is happening around us, staring at the time, thinking about how much longer the journey still takes. The commute is not just a resource, something that we have to do every day to get to work, something that we can assess and understand by thinking about how long the commute takes and how crowded the train is. To learn to dwell, we could pay attention to what surrounds us and not just think of this commute as an unpleasant task we need to do twice a day, as something that we wish to be over as quickly as possible. Maybe there are some new ways in which we can

start making this journey, maybe we can take a less-efficient but more pleasant route to work, maybe we can stop for a coffee on the way or maybe we can begin to dwell with others undertaking the same journey. Doing this would allow the commute to be a commute. We would still use trains as transport vehicles to get to work, but our attitude towards this journey would be different. The journey can no longer be understood and articulated by thinking about how efficiently it gets us to work, but the journey is something that unfolds to us in ways that we cannot express. We cannot explain this journey by talking about how useful, efficient or comfortable it is. But it is also important to note that we still cannot think of these urban places as somehow harmonious and peaceful as a result of us beginning to dwell in them, dwelling would not miraculously make the commute less crowded and less hot, and it would not mean that we exist in some harmony with our surroundings (for an account of dwelling in urban poverty, see McFarlane, 2011).

For someone who has not lived in a city, thinking about dwelling in this manner might seem alien, and it might seem impossible to even start thinking about commuting in terms of dwelling. Taking a crowded train to work every morning would make it impossible for someone not rooted in an urban environment to dwell. But similarly, for someone who has not lived in rural areas, dwelling on the countryside might seem like an alien concept, adapting to the rhythms of the life there might feel difficult and artificial because one is not rooted in those ways of doing things.

Looking at Heidegger's thinking in this manner, then, demonstrates how we can use his thinking to arrive at a different way of thinking about dwelling. It presents a new way of thinking about nature, a way that avoids the criticisms that the idea of nature has attracted. This is not meant as an interpretation of what Heidegger really meant when he talked about dwelling. We can clearly see from his writings that he was suspicious of modern technology,

his examples of dwelling centred on local, rural communities and he romanticised the ways of dwelling in these places. Instead, the purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate that the implications of Heidegger's thinking are more far-reaching and radical than even he noticed, and that his thinking can be used to overcome problematic ways of thinking about nature.

Conclusion

This chapter has continued to think about nature by exploring the roles that tradition and the rural play in Heidegger's thinking. The previous chapters of the thesis began by exploring nature in Heidegger's thinking and suggested that nature should not be understood as referring to a set of nonhuman natural beings. These chapters argued that nature should instead be understood as describing how all beings appear to us as beings. Protecting nature, then, is not about preventing environmental degradation. Instead, it is about overcoming technological thinking, overcoming thinking of beings as resources that we can manipulate and understand, about learning to stay with things, learning to dwell and becoming homely. Statesmen themselves cannot question the unfolding of nature, but it is a task we ourselves can accomplish through our own personal paths of questioning nature that we can find by following the signposts given to us by the poets and the thinkers. Green politics can, however, contribute to this questioning by making it easier for us to embark on this path. But despite demonstrating how we can think about nature without making references to the unfolding of nonhuman environments, these chapters still left some questions unanswered. They did not explain why, if Heidegger did not think of nature in terms of a nonhuman environment, he gave so many examples of how nature unfolds in environments that we conventionally think of as nonhuman, in the forests, in the countryside and away from crowded cities.

In order to address these concerns, this chapter explored how Heidegger's accounts of dwelling and resisting technological thinking do not rest on an understanding of cultures as traditional and homogenous but entail thinking of cultures as something changing and evolving. Dwelling in the fourfold does not require us to go back to older and traditional ways of doing things but it allows for evolving cultures and traditions. The chapter also demonstrated how, despite the fact that Heidegger frequently gives examples of rural areas to explain how we might learn to dwell and despite the suspicion with which he talked about cities, dwelling does not have to entail any kind of rejection of technological items. This means that we can begin to think of dwelling in the context of urban areas. Thus, thinking of nature as Heidegger's *phusis* and learning to dwell in the fourfold as a way to question this *phusis* overcomes the criticisms that talking about nature usually encounters. This way of thinking about nature does not imply a return to traditional, more 'natural' ways of doing things and it does not privilege areas that we would conventionally think of as natural. Instead, it finds opportunities for dwelling and for questioning *phusis* in the forests, in the countryside and in urban areas. The next chapter will follow this discussion by going on to explore how the way of thinking about nature presented here fits into green politics and by considering whether thinking about nature in this manner can answer the question of what kind of role the concept of nature plays in green politics.

Chapter Six: Nature in Green Politics

Introduction

The first chapter of the thesis began by exploring the puzzling role that the concept of nature plays in green politics. It demonstrated that nature seems to communicate something important about green goals, that there is more to green politics than just preventing environmental degradation. But the chapter also observed that the meaning of this concept seems to be difficult to explain. The chapters that followed then embarked on a task of looking at Heidegger's philosophy in order to listen to the word 'nature' through Heidegger's discussion of the Greek word *phusis* and to understand why nature seems to play such an important role in green politics. Chapter Two introduced Heidegger's thinking and examined how, in common with green interpretations of his philosophy, 'nature' is understood as describing the spontaneous growth and development of nonhuman environments. It also demonstrated how this way of thinking about nature in Heidegger's work leads to contradictions and argued that we need to think of an alternative way of approaching nature in his work. Chapter Three, through an examination of what Heidegger says about *phusis,* dwelling and technological thinking, ended up thinking about the concept of nature in a manner that is different from how it is conventionally understood. This chapter suggested that we should think of nature as resisting technological thinking that aims at exact representations of beings in order to control and manipulate them, and as learning to dwell in the fourfold and becoming homely. Thinking about nature in this manner is able to overcome the problems in thinking about the concept of nature that were examined in Chapter One. Nature is no longer understood as referring to the nonhuman environment and we do not have to make distinctions between human and nonhuman environments in order to talk about nature. Chapter Four then went on to examine what it means to protect nature when it is

understood in the manner suggested in the thesis and demonstrated how this way of thinking about nature cannot be understood as having an impact on preventing environmental degradation. Finally, Chapter Five examined Heidegger's rejection of technology, his suspicion of cities and the numerous examples of dwelling in rural areas that he gives in order to demonstrate why his thinking does not have to imply rural nostalgia and how we can also dwell in urban areas amidst modern technology.

The purpose of this chapter is to return to green thinking and to investigate how this different way of thinking about nature helps make sense of green goals. The argument in the chapter is divided into four sections. The first section will look at what kind of role questioning *phusis* could play in green politics, and suggests that green politics should be thought of as having two different goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment. The second section will look at how the different goals of protecting nature and protecting the environment can still fit together in a way that it makes sense for green politics to pursue these two different kinds of goals. The third section then looks at how thinking of green politics as having two goals can help us make better sense of green thinking and it will look in more detail where in green politics we can locate this concern for *phusis.* The fourth section concludes by looking at how thinking of nature as Heidegger's *phusis* helps us think about how we can protect nature and the kind of politics that could aid us in questioning *phusis.* Through these explorations, the section suggests some avenues that green thinkers could explore when thinking about the question of nature.

Locating Nature

So, how could questioning *phusis* be a part of green politics? As Chapter Four explored, politics and political actions cannot themselves question *phusis* and cannot overcome

technological thinking. But there are, however, ways of organising politics that can make our task of questioning *phusis* easier and can allow us to dwell. It is in promoting these kinds of structures that we can find a place for protecting nature in green politics. I will return to examples of what this way of protecting nature could look like at the end of the chapter. I will now move on to look more closely at the place that protecting nature occupies in green politics.

Suggesting that protecting nature should be understood in terms of practising the kind of politics that can help us question the unfolding of *phusis,* as something different from preventing environmental degradation, might sound alarming because it fails to engage with environmental problems. The purpose here is not to deny the seriousness of environmental problems or the importance of addressing them. I think that preventing environmental degradation should be seen as a part of green concerns but I also think that preventing environmental degradation should be seen as a concern that is separate from the goal of protecting nature. So this means that we should start thinking about green politics as having two different kinds of goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment.

In the paragraphs that follow, I will look in more detail at the ways in which we can think of green politics as having these two different kinds of goals. This investigation starts by looking at how we can concentrate on preventing environmental degradation, use technological thinking to find solutions to environmental problems, while, at the same time, concentrating on the goal of questioning the unfolding of nature, of Heidegger's *phusis.* A closer examination of Heidegger's thinking reveals that he does leave us space to reflect on both of these. I am going to explore how this is so by looking at how Heidegger explains that we exist always in errancy.

To begin this discussion, I will look at what Heidegger has to say about the myth of Er in his Parmenides lecture courses. His interpretation of this myth helps us start thinking about how we can question Being whilst still existing amongst beings and engaging with beings. The myth of Er is the concluding myth of Plato's *Politeia.* It tells the story of Er, a dead soldier who comes to life on his funeral pyre and tells of his journey. He tells of the demonic, uncanny district, the district that all souls must pass through before their mortal course on the earth. Because all souls pass through this district, it can tell us something about how humans exist in the world. The demonic district is the field of concealment: it is a barren field that does not allow anything to grow: 'is itself bare of all that grows as well as completely void of everything the earth lets spring forth' (PE: 118; PG: 176). The district, thus, does not allow for *phusis,* it does not allow any beings to emerge as beings.

But there is one thing that does appear in this demonic district. The souls that wander through it must make camp by a river called Carefree. It is named such because the water that can be found in this river is special:

> This water does not know care concerning what is opposed to disappearance, to going away, and consequently to withdrawing concealment. This water, which cannot be contained in any vessel because it is the pure going away of itself, does not know care over unconcealedness, the care that beings be secured in the unconcealed and therein remain constant (PE: 119; PG:177).

Everyone who is to begin their mortal journey on the earth must pass through this district and must drink from the river Carefree. Thus, everyone who journeys on the earth exists in such a way that beings are always partly concealed from them; they can never fully make sense of beings. This is why beings can appear to us as beings. But people drink different amounts from this river. Some, saved by insight, drink only a due measure. But some drink too much from the river. Heidegger explains that those who drink too much cannot show care towards beings:

> They deliver themselves over to what happens to appear and likewise to what happens to disappear. They are at the mercy of the withdrawal and the concealment of beings. […] They are the careless ones, who

> feel content with the thoughtlessness that has withdrawn from every claim on the thinker (PE, 120: PG: 178).

As Ward (1995: 201) explains, this means that concealment itself is concealed to those who drink more than the due measure. They thus fail to question Being, and they fall back to technological thinking, thinking that they can define and understand beings, manipulate them and use them as resources. Only those who drink a due measure remain thoughtful, and can continue to question Being.

What is interesting about Heidegger's interpretation of this myth is that it explains why we should not be constantly venturing beyond beings, why we should not allow concealment to prevail in the world as much as possible. This is because drinking too much from the river *lethe* does not allow for the happening of truth and for questioning *phusis.* Heidegger explains that those who drink continuously from this river cannot exist in the world as humans. For them, everything is concealed, they do not allow for the errancy that is part of the way humans are in the world, that is required for violently confronting *phusis* and allowing for the happening of truth (PE: 121; PG: 180). Those who drink once from the river but drink too much are also unable to question Being because truth is concealed from them. They succumb to technological thinking. Only those who drink the right amount encounter beings in their truth. Only by drinking the right amount, by continuing to engage with beings, can beings be unconcealed to us. Only then can we remain attentive to the mystery of Being and learn to momentarily leap beyond beings, question the truth of Being, the unfolding of *phusis,* and become homely. So we can only momentarily grasp Being because to exist on the earth as humans, we must always engage with beings.

In 'On the Essence of Truth', Heidegger calls this way of being as existing in errancy. Errancy describes how, even when we question *phusis,* we cannot fully escape our engagements with beings. And so, Heidegger explains that 'the human being is subject to the

rule of mystery and *at the same time* to the oppression of errancy' (ET: 151; WW: 93, emphasis original). Existing in errancy is unavoidable: 'The errancy through which man strays is not something which, as it were, extends alongside man like a ditch into which he occasionally stumbles; rather errancy belongs to the inner constitution of the Dasein into which historical man is admitted' (ET: 150; WW: 92). We are always turning away from the mystery of Being towards beings. Errancy leads us astray, leads us to engage with beings instead of questioning Being. But errancy does not close off all the possibilities for questioning Being: 'errancy, at the same time contributes to the possibility that […] by experiencing errancy itself and by not mistaking the mystery of Dasein, he not let himself be led astray' (ET: 151; WW: 93). We, then, should not attempt to overcome errancy but we should acknowledge its presence, accept it and question it. Errancy is not something that we can ever get rid of fully. We will always question Being from amidst beings that we are turned towards. What is important is to recognise engaging with beings for what it is, not to confuse it with questioning Being. So practising environmental politics, engaging with beings, does not make it impossible for us to question *phusis* because engaging with beings is always part of how we are in the world.

Always existing in errancy is not only something unavoidable but it can also be seen as something desirable. The reason for this becomes clear if we return to the themes explored in Chapter Four that traced the development of Heidegger's thinking of the *polis*. The inquiry so far has not engaged with the question of whether there is something in Heidegger's thinking of Being that led to his engagements with National Socialism as some have claimed (see e.g. Caputo, 1993, Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990). So, should we be wary of relying too much on questioning Being and on Heidegger's account of the *polis,* is there something about the way in which Heidegger questions Being that led to his engagements with National Socialism?

I do not think that questioning Being necessarily had to lead Heidegger to National Socialism. However, as Richardson (1992: 18) explains, Heidegger's involvements with National Socialism point to a danger in his work because they demonstrate that there was nothing in the way in which he questioned Being that could have prevented these kinds of engagements. Heidegger's involvements with National Socialism demonstrate that it is easy to err in this manner when concentrating on questioning Being and avoiding making any statements concerning how things stand with beings themselves. Heidegger never properly addressed this danger, at least not explicitly. As explored in Chapter Five, Heidegger's response to his political involvements was to move away from everyday political engagements. So rather than providing an answer to the question of how we can question Being in a way that has political consequences and, at the same time, avoid the dangers in this kind of questioning, Heidegger distanced himself from this question, and began to divorce his questioning from the conduct of politics. But if the purpose here is to go beyond our personal journeys of questioning Being and to be able to say something about the role of *phusis* in green politics, then this kind of engagement is insufficient, and we need to look closer at these potential dangers in Heidegger's thinking. Recognising that even when we are questioning Being, we are always turning towards beings can provide a way out of these problems by demonstrating how we can engage with beings and think about the consequences of our actions on this level while questioning Being.

The dangers of focusing solely on questioning Being in the case of green politics are clear. As explored in Chapter Four, if we did not pay attention to environmental degradation, if we only concentrated on questioning the unfolding of nature, of *phusis,* and on learning to dwell, we could end up with unsustainable ways of dwelling. The previous chapter also demonstrated how learning to dwell amidst apples might result is unsustainable ways of consuming apples. Thus, only questioning the unfolding of *phusis* could have potentially

disastrous consequences for the environment because there is nothing in the way in which Heidegger questions *phusis* that could prevent us from adopting environmentally unfriendly ways of living and dwelling. Thinking of environmental politics as another goal that green politics has is a way of addressing these concerns because it allows us to think about questions of environmental degradation as we begin to question *phusis*. But when we engage with questions of environmental degradation, we must also remember that concentrating only on protecting and managing the environment is not enough because it would mean forgetting to question Being and losing sight of nature, forgetting that we should not only think of beings in terms of resources. Regulating and taking care of the environment perfectly only leads us further away from questioning *phusis*. Heidegger describes the obsession with perfectly controlling our environments as follows:

> Everything is functioning. This is exactly what is so uncanny, that everything is functioning and the functioning drives us more and more to even further functioning, and that technology tears men loose from the earth and uproots them (Spiegel: 105).

To lead fulfilling lives, we must recognise that even if we could regulate the environment perfectly, we still could not fully understand the unfolding of beings.

Fitting Together

So we have now arrived at an understanding of green thinking where green politics is, in fact, driven by two different goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment: protecting the environment is about preventing environmental degradation in a more traditional sense and protecting nature is about resisting technological thinking, about learning to dwell in the fourfold and about questioning *phusis*. But how, then, do these the two different goals of green thinking, dwelling and preventing environmental degradation, fit together and why does it make sense to pursue these two goals at the same time? I am here

going to explore two ways in which we can think of these different goals as belonging together. I will first look at how working to prevent environmental degradation can inspire us to begin questioning *phusis*. And after this, I will look at how questioning *phusis* has the potential to help us find new, environmentally friendly ways of dwelling.

So how could wanting to protect the environment help us start reflecting on *phusis?* We can understand how this is so if we think about how it is not an accident that green politics has two goals, the goal of protecting the environment and the goal of protecting nature. This happened because, after Aristotle, understandings of the unfolding of beings have changed. Where the pre-Socratics describe *phusis* as the unfolding of all beings, modern interpretations have interpreted *phusis* following Aristotle, as only describing the unfolding of some nonhuman environment.

But if *phusis* has, for a long time, been something we primarily observe in things considered as a part of the nonhuman environment, then maybe this means that questioning the unfolding of that which is conventionally understood as the nonhuman nature might help us start thinking about what it means to protect *phusis.* If it is really this idea of *phusis* that we are trying to get at when we are talking about nature, then the way in which we experience nature, even when we equate with the mysterious growth and development of nonhuman environments, should bear some similarities with how we experience *phusis.*

Something like this is indeed suggested by Vycinas (1961: 150-151) who writes that '[t]he rising and setting sun, changing phases of the moon, the starry sky, and the serene mountains or wild forests still give a glimpse of the once over-whelming *phusis*.' So, for example, thinking of the apples growing in the garden and thinking of the importance that they have for us can help us escape technological thinking and to think about things as something other than just resources. Thinking about the unfolding of that which we conventionally think of as

nonhuman nature, then, is a way of helping us start thinking about *phusis*, just as long as we remember that the unfolding of this *phusis* is not limited to environments we conventionally think of as nonhuman.

So one reason why protecting the environment and protecting nature are linked is that reflecting on that which we conventionally think of as the nonhuman environment can help us start questioning *phusis*. But there is also another reason why I think these two are linked. Questioning *phusis* can have an impact on the way in which we conduct environmental politics. Although, as explored in previous chapters, abandoning technological thinking cannot be guaranteed to have environmentally friendly consequences, resisting technological thinking can open up possibilities for alternative ways of living which can have environmentally friendly outcomes. Technological items can open up these possibilities because, although technical devices can continue to play a part in our lives as we learn to dwell, overcoming technological thinking requires that we start engaging with these devices differently, that we do not just see them as resources and that we do not just think of ourselves as subjects whose sole purpose is to use these devices with maximum efficiency. And this kind of rethinking has the possibility of opening up new, environmentally friendly ways of doing things. How is this so?

Gaining a different understanding of who we are in the world has been identified by many green thinkers as something necessary for us to start living more sustainable lifestyles. As Paterson (2007: 223) explains, motivating people to change their habits of consumption is a question of changing people's sense of who they are in the world: changing people's behaviours is not just about finding new, more environmentally friendly technologies, but it is also about changing people's perceptions of themselves so that they will adopt these new technologies. He uses cars as an example to illustrate this further. In order to motivate people to drive less and to switch to alternative forms of transport such as cycling, we need to

change people's perceptions of themselves as free car-owning individuals that have a right to reach their destination at maximum efficiency (Paterson, 2007: 222-223; see also Plumwood, 1991: 21). Not seeing ourselves as free car-owing individuals and the world around us as a resource to be managed as efficiently as possible may not yet guarantee that we adopt environmentally friendly modes of transport. But it does encourage us to rethink the way in which we travel, opening up possibilities for doing things in an environmentally friendly fashion.

Another example of how questioning *phusis* can help us change our lifestyles can be found by again looking at the apple as an example. How could avoiding technological thinking when we begin to engage with the apple open up new possibilities for practising environmental politics? Barry's (2012) example of transition movements elaborates on some of the consequences that beginning to dwell could have for the way in which we consume food. Barry (2012: 110) explains that because food is something that we need everyday, shared rituals and practices can easily be developed around the production and consumption of food. Proponents of transition movements argue that in order to confront environmental degradation, we should not just consume food differently, but we need to reinvent the way that we consume food, we should aim to 'protect local distinctiveness and pride in local food cultures form the predations of an industrialised, chemicalised, homogenising and mass production food system.' Transition movements thus propose 'according more time to food preparation and consumption and having greater awareness of and connection to where, how, and who has grown and prepared one's meals' (Barry, 2012: 111). So here again, these alternative forms of consumption are not only about finding better forms of utilising the environment as a resource, but they are about changing our perception of who we are in the world. Thus, transition movements can be thought of in terms of focusing less on finding the

most efficient ways of doing things and placing importance of dwelling and becoming homely.

Rethinking the way in which we consume food can, for example, have an impact on how we consume apples. It can encourage us to re-invent the way that we eat apples. As a result of these kinds of reflections, we could start taking greater pride in how we prepare food from apples. We could start seeing apples as something more than nourishment, seeing consuming apples as a more important part of our daily routines. We may also begin to consume locally produced apples, avoiding apples that have been brought to us through longer supply chains that we feel alienated from. As has been explained previously, this does not necessarily lead to environmentally friendly outcomes and it does not necessarily mean that we will adopt practices that allow us to grow and consume apples in the most environmentally friendly fashion. Indeed, growing food locally is not always the best way to protect the environment. Critics have argued that locally grown food is not necessarily the most sustainable option, and calculations have demonstrated that sometimes importing food from warm climates can be more environmentally friendly than growing food in colder climates (Gnalli and Brunori, 2013: 11-12).[4] However, thinking about how we can start consuming food differently can open up new avenues for dwelling and can open up new ways of thinking about how we can become environmentally friendly. It guides us away from industrially produced food and away from driving to big supermarkets, thus reducing pollution (see Whitelegg, 1995).

In this account of dwelling, it is still entirely possible that our ways of dwelling and our renewed understandings of who we are in the word end up being environmentally unfriendly

[4] This might be an unfair criticism to make about the transition town movement whose focus is not, in fact, to develop sustainable practices but instead, to develop resilient ones, to develop communities that are able to absorb shocks. Thus, from a resilience stand point, it might make more sense to rely on locally produced food because this might make these food networks more resilient (see e.g. Connors and MacDonald, 2010; Hopkins, 2008; Walker and Salt, 2006). However, it is still the case simply learning to dwell and returning to some traditional ways of doing things do not yet necessarily lead to resilient communities, but we need to rely on technological, calculative thinking to start thinking about resilience.

and destructive. This does not, however, have to be a problem because reflections on environmental politics can guide the way we dwell on the earth. As has been explained in Chapter Five, ways of dwelling are open to contestations and are always changing, they do not remain static. Allowing some reflections on environmental politics to guide the way in which our dwelling practices evolve makes sense because, as was explored earlier in the chapter, it is questionable whether, when we are thinking about how the way we question Being might shape politics, it is desirable to rely on this kind of questioning alone. The way that Heidegger questions Being does not give us tools for assessing the consequences that this kind of questioning has for beings themselves. These technological inquiries into dwelling are not necessarily something that make it impossible for us to dwell, just as long as we are not overcome by this technological way of thinking and are able to give space for non-technological ways of doing things.

There are, then, two ways in which we can think about preventing environmental degradation and protecting nature as linked. Firstly, dwelling can open up new possibilities for confronting environmental degradation. Secondly, reflecting on environmental degradation and thinking about how we can best confront it can also guide the way in which we dwell. This would mean that, at times, when thinking about the environmental consequences of alternative ways of consuming apples, we might have to give up some of the idealised images we have of what it means to grow apples locally. These reflections on environmental degradation can encourage us to rethink the ways in which we dwell, and encourage us to found ways of dwelling in an environmentally friendly fashion. We might, for example, end up experimenting with new ways of farming or sourcing food through alternative networks that give us more control over where and how this food is sourced.

This means that although green politics is made of two different goals, these goals are not entirely separate, and the pursuit of one of these goals can support the pursuit of the other.

These two goals might, at times, be in conflict with each other, and we might need to make choices and decide which one to support in a given instance. But they can also be mutually supportive goals.

Nature in Green Politics

So far this discussion of green politics and what it should entail has taken place at a fairly abstract level. I am now going to return to green politics itself in order to find out where in green politics we can find these two different goals. I will also look at if this way of thinking about green politics helps in responding to the questions raised by Chapter One about the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics.

The first chapter of the thesis raised concerns about the way green thinkers talk about nature. It demonstrated how sometimes, when green thinkers are talking about nature, this talk becomes very problematic. This is because greens refer to nature as the nonhuman environment without explaining how we can make distinctions between human and nonhuman environments. So there is a concern that talking about nature hampers the way in which we discuss environmental politics because our practice of environmental politics is now informed by a concept of nature that is a socially constructed concept. Yet, sometimes, this concept seems to be articulating something important about protecting our environments that cannot be articulated through the language of environmental politics. Recognising that green politics has two different kinds of goals helps us make sense of the way in which the concept of nature should be used in green politics: it allows us to recognise that although the concept of nature might be useful in articulating some green goals, it can also be detrimental in other instances. I am going to begin this exploration into how we should use this concept by looking at when we should not be using it.

These reflections allow us to understand when we should not be talking about nature, when talking about nature is unhelpful and obscures the aims of green politics, and when we could better understand these goals without making references to nature. Firstly, they help us understand how, even if the concept of nature does articulate something important about green goals, it should not be used to discuss environmental degradation. For example, when Barry (1999) highlights the importance of exploring the heterogeneous relationships that we share with an unpredictable nature, these references to nature are not needed, and we could simply talk about the environment in order to avoid problems in thinking about nature as referring to the nonhuman environment. Neither should this concept of nature play a role in Naess' (1989) discussions on the causes of environmental degradation and the solution to environmental crisis. Even if nature does feel like an important concept, even if it does seem to communicate something important about the way in which we should take care of our environments, in these cases, where the main concern is environmental degradation, this concept should not be used. We can make better sense of environmental degradation without making references to nature.

This also helps us respond to a second concern that Chapter One raised in regards to the use of the concept of nature in green thinking, the way in which green thinkers refer to nature when they are discussing how we should extend the moral community to include nonhuman natural beings. This way of talking about extending the moral community is problematic because it is unclear what these natural beings are, and why we should be privileging nonhuman natural beings over nonhuman beings. But we can now see that the concept of nature is not needed when we are discussing extending the moral community to include nonhumans. For example, references to nature are not needed in Eckersley's (1992) account of ecocentrism. Eckersley's case for ecocentrism can be made without talking about nature. As can be recalled from Chapter One, Eckersley wants to think about extending the moral

community by looking at the degree of sentience of an organism, its capacity for richness of experience and whether its species is endangered amongst other factors. Nature does not have to feature in these discussions. Instead of talking about extending the moral community to encompass natural, nonhuman beings, we could simply talk about extending it to nonhuman beings, evaluate the level of sentience of an organism and investigate whether the species is endangered without talking about nature. Nature, although it can be helpful in articulating some of green goals, is not helpful in trying to talk about ecocentrism.

So we have now discussed when green thinkers should stop talking about nature because making these references to nature is not helpful in making sense of green goals. But where in green politics can we, then, find a concern for nature, and when can talking about nature help us understand green goals? Because the green way of approaching nature is mixed up with thinking of nature as the nonhuman environment, it can be difficult to locate this kind of concern for nature as *phusis* in the approaches to green thinking that were introduced in Chapter One. However, if we look carefully, we can find these references to nature. Thinking of nature in terms of *phusis* can be seen most clearly in the account of green politics provided by deep ecology that concentrates on how the experiences that we have of nature can change the way in which we conduct environmental politics. As discussed in previous chapter, deep ecology is not just about finding environmentally friendly ways of living. For deep ecology, protecting nature was not about managing the environment or about deriving rules by which we can start according value to natural beings. Instead, the starting point for deep ecology was to recognise that things do not exist as atomistic objects but they can only be understood as parts of larger wholes. Protecting the environment was about finding a renewed sense of the self where we begin to experience ourselves as a part of the larger whole of our environments, where we begin to identify ourselves as a part of our environments and through this identification, begin to value our environments for their own sake. Deep

ecologists thus emphasise recognising how our environments are not just resources and want us to begin to experience these environments as something more than this (see e.g. Naess, 1989).

Thinking about this experience of nature that guides deep ecology as Heidegger's *phusis* rather than nonhuman nature is important. This is because it allows us to make better sense of the kinds of arguments that deep ecologists are making and it prevents us from dismissing them unduly. So how is this? As Chapter One demonstrated, deep ecology has been criticised because it relies on learning how to protect nature through intuitions, and it is thus relying on socially constructed ideas of what nature is rather than investigating actual environmental degradation. Consequently, many have argued that deep ecology's priority is not to protect our environments, but it is to develop the sense of the self, to develop ourselves so that we can begin to experience ourselves as a part of a larger whole. De-Shalit (2000: 52), for example, argues that

> The fact is that these philosophers have political goals that are not necessarily related to pollution, sewage, radioactive radiation, waste disposal, the extinction of wild animals, or the keeping of balance of ecosystems. They are looking to say something about politics –from the definition of the self.

We are now in a position of address these criticisms. Rethinking what we really mean when we are talking about nature demonstrates that it is not so easy to dismiss the arguments that deep ecologists are making. If the concern of the deep ecologists is for nature, understood as Heidegger's *phusis,* then the fact that deep ecologists are unable to address environmental degradation is not a problem. This is because, as demonstrated earlier in the thesis, environmental degradation is not something that protecting nature should be able to address.

The mistakes made by deep ecologists are to assume that this renewed sense of the self can only be gained through experiencing some nonhuman environment and to think that protecting nature automatically leads us to protect the environment. Nature, contrary to what Naess (1989: 66) claims, is not only found by looking at the heart of the forest or the life of

the river. These experiences can also be found from areas that we do not conventionally think of as natural. My experiences of nature, for example, extend beyond the apple trees that grow in my grandparents' garden, beyond the Finnish forests and beyond the countryside: these experiences can be found by concentrating, for example, on the life of on urban streets or in the heart of a block of flats in a city. If deep ecologists wish to protect nature and prevent environmental degradation, they could do this by incorporating reflections on how to conduct environmental politics into their accounts without making references to protecting nature.

The other approach to ecocentrism, the rules-based approach, does not focus as much on nature, understood in terms of *phusis.* As discussed earlier in the chapter, in this approach, the concept of nature is mostly used to refer to the nonhuman environment that, as explained in the first chapter, is a problematic way of approaching nature. We can overcome these problems by simply not talking about nature when discussing environmental degradation. But the concern for nature is not lacking from all of these rules-based approaches to ecocentrism, and we can find hints of the importance of nature even from these accounts. Curry (2006: 102), for example, argues that we should not view nature in purely mechanistic and materialistic terms because nature has a spiritual dimension to it as well. Recognising this spiritual dimension in protecting nature is important because seeing nature in these terms would ensure that we would no longer think of nature as a passive, inanimate object. Instead, we would recognise that nature will always remain to us 'an inexhaustible mystery' (Curry, 2006: 104). Curry's account of nature presents a richer view of what is at stake in protecting our environment than Eckersley's. It acknowledges that the way in which we experience our surroundings and make sense of them has environmental consequences and that overcoming thinking of our surroundings as made up of inanimate objects and resources is important for confronting environmental degradation. But we can make better sense of Curry's argument if we do not try to mix these two ways of questioning and thinking about nature together and

think that they are both talking about protecting the environment. Acknowledging that protecting nature, understood as questioning *phusis,* resisting technological thinking and learning to dwell, and preventing environmental degradation are separate goals prevents us from rejecting the claim that this mystery of nature is unimportant because preventing environmental degradation should be left to science.

But how could making this distinction between protecting nature and protecting the environment help us make sense of the arguments of those green thinkers who do not claim to be attributing intrinsic value to nature? Because the green literature that does not accord intrinsic value to nature consists of many different kinds of approaches to thinking about the environment, in the interest of space, I will here only concentrate on examining John Barry's (1999) account of virtue ethics and ecological citizenship and on Andrew Dobson's (2003) account of ecological citizenship. I will spend slightly longer examining this example because it is an interesting case. Whereas Barry's account of ecological citizenship uses the idea of nature to make sense of how we might become ecological citizens, Dobson's does not. Thinking of the question of preserving the environment and protecting nature as two separate questions helps make sense of the different ways that Dobson and Barry formulate their accounts of ecological citizenship, and demonstrates that some of the disagreements between Dobson and Barry are caused by them asking different kinds of questions.

As explained in Chapter One, Barry does not think that greens should accord intrinsic value to some homogenous nature. For him, nature cannot teach us lessons about how to live in harmony with our environments. Instead of focusing on a homogenous nature, greens should focus on 'individuals within particular cultural contexts facing more or less determinate parts of the environment' (Barry, 1999: 51). Focusing on these different kinds of relationships that we share with our environments leads Barry to advocate virtue ethics as a means of protecting the environment. Barry thus proposes an account of ecological

citizenship based on the development of ecological virtues. People can develop ecological virtues when they come to see their interests in a wider context, when they begin to see how their interests are linked to the interests of nature and no longer see their interests in terms of narrow self-interests.

But thinking of nature in terms of *phusis* and dwelling is not completely missing from Barry's account of environmental ethics. This can be seen in the way that Barry discusses agricultural stewardship which for him is something that helps us develop ecological virtues. We can learn this model of agricultural stewardship and gain insight into how to develop ecological virtues in rural areas that have been shaped less by the human hand. Barry argues that the urban population is less able to encounter nature: 'modern life for the majority of people is not based on direct relations to, or experiences of, the land or the non-human environment' (Barry and Smith, 2008: 578). But people can still develop ecological virtues in urban areas: 'While the majority of people in modern society have not direct, transformative experiences of nature, this does not mean that the dispositions and attitudes constitutive of stewardship as a mode of action are impossible to cultivate in an urban setting' (Barry, 1999: 257). In urban settings, people can learn to act in an ecologically virtuous manner by participating in democratic processes and through social learning. However, knowledge of nature gained through this kind of behaviour is still mediated and not direct. Because of this, rural areas will always play a privileged role in the practice of environmental politics (Barry, 1999: 228). So, in the end, although Barry's account is different from that of deep ecology, it still shares some surprising similarities with it. The idea of learning to care for our environments, learning to develop ecological virtues through experiencing a nonhuman nature is still at the heart of Barry's account, and nature is still teaching us what our model of taking care of the environment should be like (see e.g. MacGregor, 2006: 88-90). Thus, the idea of experiencing a nonhuman nature is present in Barry's account of green politics.

To overcome Barry's focus on the transformative experiences of nature that we can find in rural areas, we could argue that we now have to stop basing the development of ecological virtues on these experiences of nature. Developing ecological virtues would have to be based purely on scientific reasoning about what can best help us protect our environment. But this would now leave something out of the approach proposed by Barry. This new approach would leave out the experience of nature that can open up new possibilities for confronting environmental degradation. To explore further how this way of thinking about nature could help make better sense of Barry's arguments, I will examine in more detail a debate between Dobson and Barry on what ecological citizenship should entail, and explain how the approach to green politics proposed in this thesis can help make sense of what is at stake in this debate.

Dobson (2003) presents an account of ecological citizenship that frames the question of how to take care of our environments in a way which does not rely on an idea of nature. Dobson's ecological citizenship relies on an 'ecological form of post-cosmopolitan citizenship' which is concerned with non-contractual responsibilities that are not bounded by the territories in which we live (Dobson, 2003: 68). These responsibilities are determined by the size of a person's ecological footprint. Humans come to know what their duties as ecological citizens are by the following rule: 'if my ecological footprint is of an unsustainable size, then my obligation is to reduce it' (Dobson, 2003: 120-121). This formulation of ecological citizenship aims to persuade people that they have duty to ensure that their ecological footprint does not make it impossible for others, for people living in other parts of the globe and future generations, to enjoy natural resources (Dobson, 2003: 91).

But Barry is concerned that Dobson's formulation of ecological citizenship does not extend far enough because it does not, in the end, explain what gives rise to these duties that we have towards others. Barry thus explains that 'Dobson's notion of ecological citizenship demands too much, especially in the absence of any discussion of the balance to be struck between

legitimate "self-interest" and concern for others' (Barry, 2002: 146). Furthermore, Barry argues that Dobson's account does not explain why perceiving injustice would lead to a change in our behaviour:

> [I]t also needs to be said that environmental education, knowledge and awareness by themselves are not sufficient conditions for changing individual and collective behaviour in a more sustainable direction. Merely making people aware about the environment impact of human consumption practices for example, will not automatically make them alter their consumption. On top of knowledge of their effects on the environment and their dependence upon it, people also need to be given reasons to change their ways of thinking and acting (Barry, 2002: 140).

Barry thus argues that ecological citizenship should be based around the idea of developing ecological virtues, based on those transformative experiences that we have of a nonhuman nature that inspire us to begin to develop ourselves so that we can become good ecological citizens. According to Barry, this formulation of ecological citizenship is better able to explain what motivates us to become ecological citizens in the first place.

Dobson (2003: 121) responds to Barry by explaining that his account of ecological citizenship does not demand too much. Dobson explains that there are limits to the duties we owe to others when we become ecological citizens and that these kinds of duties are not open-ended: duties are owned because of an unfair distribution of resources between citizens. Dobson also addresses the question of why we would want to care for the environment. Ecological citizens, in Dobson's account, care for the environment because they want to do justice. However, Dobson (2003: 121-2) admits not being able to explain what might motivate them to do justice and to act like ecological citizens in the first place.

So Dobson's account of ecological citizenship fails, in the end, to address the underlying motivations that encourage us to take care of our environments. At the same time, Barry's account of what these motivations might be and where they are coming from is not entirely satisfactory because these motivations arise from transformative experiences that we have of some nonhuman nature which can supposedly teach us how to act in an environmentally

virtuous manner. Thinking of these transformative experiences we have of nature as something that do not relate to protecting our nonhuman environments can help find a way of thinking about these problems. We could still follow Dobson and recognise that the duties of ecological citizens are formed through making calculations concerning how we interact with our environments and of the kinds of impact that these interactions have, and we could still argue that they do not derive from any kind of experience of a nonhuman nature. But this does not mean that nature itself is not important. The experiences we have of nature and recognising the importance of taking care of the places in which we live can allow for a transformation in the way in which we view ourselves and this can result in us being willing to scale down our consumption. Thinking about protecting nature and taking care of the places in which we live in terms of questioning Heidegger's *phusis* helps, as will be explored more in the next section, further reflect on how we can protect nature and take care of the places in which we dwell.

Protecting Nature

The previous section demonstrated how recognising that green politics has two different kinds of goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment allows for making better sense of the green arguments and helps us better locate the concern for nature in green politics. This section concludes the chapter by exploring how thinking about nature as something other than the nonhuman environment, as the unfolding of Heidegger's *phusis*, also opens up new avenues for thinking about protecting nature. If protecting nature no longer draws its inspiration from questioning some kind of a nonhuman environment, how, then, should we start approaching the kinds of political structures that can help us question *phusis*? I will here explore the kinds of political structures that can aid us in questioning *phusis* and also suggest some new avenues that green politics could pursue when

thinking about them. I will begin by looking at the kinds of political structures that Heidegger thought could help us question Being.

The kinds of structures that can help us protect nature, I think, have to promote openness, democratic participation and public engagement. Heidegger himself was suspicious of the potential democracy holds for allowing us to overcome technological thinking and allowing us to dwell. This becomes evident, for example, in the interview with *Der Spiegel* where Heidegger expresses doubts as to whether democracy can help us overcome technological thinking (Spiegel: 104). Heidegger had these doubts because he saw that democracy itself is based on technological thinking, on the idea that we are atomistic, free individuals. Consequently, it cannot offer us tools for overcoming it (IJssling, 1992: 9; Gauthier, 2011: 96-7). As de Beistegui (1998: 116) explains, '[w]ith the collapse of fascism and of Soviet communism, the liberal model has proven to be the most effective and powerful vehicle of the global spread of technology'.

However, although current models of democracy might be bound up with technological thinking, Heidegger may have misjudged the potential democracy has for allowing us to overcome technological thinking. Malpas (2006: 385 n. 212), for example, finds in democracy the kind of focus on questioning that can allow us to overcome technological thinking. It is possible to find different forms of democracy, separate from capitalism, which can question Being (Dallmeyr, 2010: 80). Democracy and democratic engagements in the public sphere are important because they can allow for the kind of engagements with places that resist technological thinking and the kind of sense of place that allows us to dwell. Coward (2008: ch3) argues in a similar vein and wants to think of dwelling as something that happens in places which are public and shared by others, that can be shaped by and lived in by all. So, although we approach democratic structures often through technological thinking, it is nevertheless these kinds of structures, with their emphasis on openness and public

engagement, that can help us question *phusis*. What kinds of political structures, then, can encourage these kinds of engagements with places?

A lot of green politics is already addressing these questions by exploring how we can develop a sense of place, often centring around thinking about how small, decentralised communities could provide us with a new sense of a place:

> A society made up of decentralised, self-sufficient communities, in which people work near their homes, have the responsibility of governing themselves, of running their schools, hospitals and welfare service, in fact constituting real communities, should, we feel, be a much happier place (*The Ecologist*, 1972: 62).

But this inquiry should not be restricted to these kinds of reflections, and it should not be made by relying on an idea of living in harmony with some kind of a nonhuman nature. Green politics should also explore the sense of place in areas that we do not conventionally consider as natural. These kinds of investigations are not completely missing from green politics. Cannavo (2007), for example, draws attention to how the green concern for place does not only apply to areas that we would conventionally consider as nonhuman and therefore natural, but this concern extends beyond, to the urban and to the suburban. So what could showing concern for places in this manner look like?

Green politics could, for example, play a role in the example of dwelling during the rush-hour commute, which was discussed in the previous chapter. It could do this by encouraging us to learn to dwell in the fourfold by paying attention to how we make sense of places and rethinking the power-relations in deciding who plans the development of urban areas. Cities are often planned for the efficient circulation of capital rather than for the sake of the people who live in the cities (see e.g. Harvey, 2012: ch1). Often areas that are being regenerated in urban areas are done for the sake of foreign investors and visitors, appealing to some vague ideas to advertise the city while the city itself 'lies around like a vague backcloth, a taken for-granted idea', and the local communities do not participate in the debate on what the city should be (Healey, 2002: 1784; see also Scott: 1998). Jane Jacobs (1961), for example,

criticises plans to regulate what happens in the city too much and to contain the different uses of the city in isolated areas because they are unable to pay attention to the "intricate, many-faceted cultural life of the metropolis' (Jacobs, 1961: 19).

Regulating too much how a city is used does not make dwelling impossible, but it does make it more difficult. It is this kind of approach to place-making that can prohibit us from dwelling in a Heideggerian sense because it ignores local meanings and experiences and ignores how particular places become important to people (Relp, 1979: 146-7). As Cannavo (2007) illustrates, this kind of regulation of places takes away from our experience of the city and of our surroundings. Suburban development plans that attempt to clearly assign a designated use to each developed place usually lead to a decline in public spaces as 'shopping malls, private clubs, and gated communities' begin to dominate these spaces (Cannavo, 2007: 107). Work, shopping and living spaces become isolated from each other, and suburban streets often lack sidewalks on streets for children to play in (Barber, 2002: 191-2, see also Byers, 2005). Our encounters with others become increasingly regulated through our use of the kinds of spaces where the purpose of our encounters with others is specified already in the design of the place. Shopping areas in mixed-use communities, where shopping is an activity undertaken amidst other activities such as commuting and recreation, allow for different ways of encountering others. Cannavo elaborates on these mixed-use areas as follows:

> [They] begin to build multifaceted relationships and develop a sense of habitation in, identification with, and responsibility for, a shared place; in some cases, a shared sense of community might arise. Meanwhile, the neighbourhood itself is enriched and enlivened with a variety of meanings (Cannavo, 2007: 107).

Thus, refraining from regulating the use of spaces and designing mixed-use urban spaces can aid us in learning to dwell in the manner that has been discussed in the previous chapters. It allows us to be with others in a more authentic manner by not imposing pre-determined meanings on the places in which we dwell.

Allowing local communities to have more say in the way that their communities are designed and having places in the city that are driven less by the need for the development of capital can also help us in our quest of thinking about what it means to dwell and how we can question *phusis*. In the case of the rush-hour commute, for example, it might transform the way we commute and the length of our commute. If places were less segregated and less divided between residential and work places, we could have the opportunity to live closer to where we work. If capital interest were not the primary determinant of property development, house prices nearer city centres could be more affordable, and people could be able to move closer to where they work. All this can decrease the time we spend commuting, and could mean that commuters would better afford the luxury of not paying attention to the efficiency of their commute. They would have more time to dwell in the city.

At the same time, this could also open up new avenues for practising environmental politics, and support the green goal of protecting the environment. As Cannovo (2010) illustrates, rethinking how places are designed and used, moving towards more mixed-use urban places, could result in people being less reliant on cars to do shopping. Reducing the population's reliance on cars would also allow for more pedestrian friendly public spaces, allowing us to make more journeys on foot (Cannavo, 2010: 228-9; Whitelegg: 1995). Although these environmentally friendly outcomes are not guaranteed, questioning *phusis* in this manner and thinking about place in the urban can open up possibilities for a more environmentally friendly way of dwelling in the city.

Learning to dwell in the city would not mean that we begin to live harmoniously with our environments, that inequalities and poverty would suddenly disappear. As was explored in Chapter Five, these are questions that we cannot, at least not at the moment, address through questioning Being and through dwelling. These kinds of problems, like environmental problems, require a different kind of questioning to be tackled. But thinking about dwelling

can encourage us to dwell in the city with others, to feel a sense of place in the city. Being-with others in a more authentic manner can also allow us to take first steps towards thinking about solving these problems because it can teach us to be more tolerant of the different ways in which other city-dweller are in the world. It can encourage us to take more responsibility for the problems that surround us and to begin a different kind of questioning in order to try to find solutions to these problems.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the role that protecting nature could play in green politics alongside protecting the environment. Previous chapters have demonstrated how the concept of nature plays an important role in green politics. It articulates something important about green goals but the meaning of this concept is nevertheless difficult to articulate. This thesis then turned to Heidegger's philosophy to try to make sense of the concept of nature. Abandoning the common green interpretation of Heidegger's nature, *phusis,* as the spontaneous growth and development of nonhuman natural beings in ways that we cannot fully comprehend, the thesis went on divorce nature from the material growth of a set of natural beings and suggested that we should start thinking of nature as describing how all beings appear to us as beings. Protecting nature is now about resisting technological thinking, a kind of thinking that thinks of beings in terms of resources that can be controlled and manipulated. It is no longer related to the practice of environmental politics, but it is about learning to dwell, about allowing beings to appear to us as beings while keeping in mind that we cannot fully understand how they appeared as beings. This will, in the end, allow us to dwell in the places that we inhabit and be at home in them.

The role of this chapter was to examine how this new way of thinking about nature can help us make better sense of green goals by demonstrating that green politics has two separate goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment. The chapter begun by looking at where in green politics we can locate this concern for nature. It then went on to look in more detail at what it might mean to protect nature and to learn to dwell and at the role modern urban and technological environments could play in this dwelling. It suggested some ways in which these two goals that green politics has can fit together. Protecting nature can help in protecting the environment because it can open up possibilities for new ways of doing things and for more environmentally friendly lifestyles. The chapter also suggested that phenomena found in what we conventionally call the nonhuman nature can help us start thinking about *phusis* because this is where we are used to observing nature. Finally, the chapter looked at how thinking about protecting nature as something separate from the practice of environmental politics helps us make better sense of green politics and helps us understand how we can go on talking about nature without talking about it in terms of the nonhuman environment. The chapter explored when we should and when we should not talk about nature in green politics and looked at how thinking of nature as Heidegger's *phusis* allows us to start thinking about what it means to protect nature if it is to be understood as something separate from the practice of environmental politics.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have examined the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics through an examination of the thinking of Heidegger. I have also elaborated on the concept of nature by interrogating the experiences that I have of the apples that grow in my grandparents' garden, attempting to locate the experiences of nature in this garden. Finding that green political thinkers did not wholly address the concerns of those who claim nature is not anything nonhuman but it is social, the thesis moved on to examine Heidegger's thinking in order to find a new way of approaching about nature. A rethinking of what the concepts of nature and the earth refer to in his thought allowed for a new way of investigating the question of nature. Nature no longer refers to the nonhuman environment but it now refers to the way in which all things appear to us as beings. Nature is not in my grandparents' garden because the apples that grow there are somehow nonhuman and natural, but nature is there because I have learned to dwell in this garden, I have learned to pay attention to how the garden appears to me as a garden. This has allowed for a new way of thinking about the relationship between nature and environmental politics. Protecting nature is no longer about preventing environmental degradation, and environmental politics should be practised without making any references to nature. Protecting nature should be seen as another, separate goal that green politics has.

The Puzzle of Nature

This thesis began by looking at how the way in which nature is discussed in the green literature is a puzzle. Green thinkers differ from more traditional environmentalist thinkers. Whereas environmental thinkers are concerned with taking care of our environments for the sake managing the resources in the environment, green thinkers claim that they are interested

in protecting nature, understood as the nonhuman environment, itself. A majority of green thinkers show concern for nature by espousing a position of ecocentrism. Ecocentrism transcends traditional anthropocentric concerns by maintaining that it is not only humans that are intrinsically valuable but nature has value in itself. It should be protected for its own sake, not for the sake of the resources it has for humans. The moral community should thus be expanded to include not only humans but also other nonhuman living beings, and even non-living beings. Green thinkers who do not adopt the ecocentric position claim that the interests of humans and nature are so interlinked that we cannot make separations between human and nonhuman interests, and they incorporate the interests of nature into their account of green politics by investigating these linkages.

But when green thinkers talk about the importance of protecting nature, which they understand as the nonhuman environment, they are unable to fully respond to the criticism made by those who claim that nature is not nonhuman but it is also social. According to the proponents of the social nature thesis, our environments cannot be divided into categories of human and nonhuman because those environments that we conventionally think of as being nonhuman exist in interconnected networks with things that we would conventionally think of as human. What comes to count as nature is discursively mediated and socially constructed, often through various ideological struggles. Where, for example, can we locate nature in my grandparents' garden? Although the garden and the countryside in which it exists may have been framed as somehow more natural than the urban cities, the existence of the countryside is conditioned by the urban processes that surround it, the garden has been created and maintained by humans, and the apple trees growing in the garden have been planted there by humans.

Green thinkers have addressed these concerns by explaining how it is important to pay attention to the socially mediated character of the knowledge we have of nature. But they still

seem to think that something called nature does exist, and if we pay careful attention to the socially constructed character of the knowledge we have of nature, we can gain some kind of understanding of nature. They do not, however, explain how we can think of nature as existing in the light of the concerns raised by the proponents of the social nature thesis. All of this, then, seems to suggest that we should stop talking about nature altogether and start thinking about how to protect the environment without making any references to the idea of nature.

But despite the concerns expressed by the social nature theorists, the concept of nature does seem important, it does seem to communicate something important about green goals that cannot be articulated by just talking about the need to protect the environment. There is something in the way that green thinkers talk about the spontaneous growth and development of nature that cannot be articulated by just talking about how to protect the environment. Walking in my grandparents' garden does feel somehow special and important and I feel that talking about what I experience in the garden by talking about nature is able to explain it.

Heidegger

Heidegger's philosophy was able to shed light on this question of nature. Heidegger makes numerous references to nature throughout his works, by discussing *phusis,* the Greek word for nature, the role that the concealing earth plays in the happening of truth and by introducing the idea of dwelling in the fourfold of the earth, the sky, the gods and the mortals. In common green interpretation of Heidegger's philosophy, his references to nature are seen as referring to the spontaneous growth and development of our non-human environments and the sky and the earth are seen as referring to what allows for the growth and flourishing of a separate set of natural, nonhuman beings. To allow for the unfolding of nature and the earth

and the sky we must refrain from controlling and regulating what happens in our environments, we must not interfere with natural processes but must allow them to unfold in their own ways.

And indeed, the way in which Heidegger talks about *phusis* and the sky and the earth seems to suggest that this interpretation is correct. Most notably, Heidegger gives numerous examples of how we can dwell on the earth and under the sky in environments that we conventionally think of as nonhuman, and he seems to emphasise that dwelling must respect the spontaneous unfolding of the earth on which we dwell and of the sky above us. But by examining Heidegger's philosophy in more detail, the thesis demonstrated that these concepts must refer to something else. It showed how the common green way of thinking about the earth, the sky and nature contradicted Heidegger's understanding of the happening of truth and concluded that his thinking can have more radical implications for the way in which we think about nature than is often acknowledged.

This thesis then went on to suggest an alternative way of thinking about nature in Heidegger's works. It demonstrated that Heidegger's nature should not be seen as describing any particular material qualities of beings. Instead of understanding nature as the nonhuman environment, nature should be thought of as describing how all beings appear to us as beings. There cannot, however, be a final answer to the question of what nature in Heidegger's thinking stands for. Instead, what we can find in his thinking are ways of questioning nature, questioning that which allows beings to appear to us as beings, without arriving at an answer.

This thesis also looked at how we can protect nature if nature is no longer equated with the nonhuman environment. If nature does not refer to the spontaneous growth and flourishing of a certain class of natural beings, then talking about protecting nature does not help us in thinking about how to best prevent environmental degradation. Instead of protecting nature

through protecting the environment, we can now learn to question the unfolding of nature by learning to overcome technological thinking, a kind of thinking that aims to find different ways of representing beings so that these beings can be organised efficiently. We can resist technological thinking by learning to dwell in the fourfold of the earth, the sky, the gods and the mortals. This thesis, therefore, interprets the earth and the sky differently to the green literature on Heidegger. In these green readings of the earth and the sky, these concepts are understood as describing that which allows for the growth and flourishing of a set of natural beings. But this thesis no longer equated Heidegger's earth and sky with parts of a nonhuman nature. The earth and the sky are now thought of as the unfolding of *phusis*. Heidegger does not provide us with any final answers to the question of what these terms mean and we should not try to seek these answers. Instead, we should think of his description of the fourfold as a poetic description that can show us the way towards questioning dwelling. We learn to dwell on the earth and under the sky when we do not think of things in terms of efficiency, when we allow for the gathering of the fourfold and for the appearance of things as they are.

This means that protecting nature in my grandparents' garden is not related to questions of how to best take care of the Finnish countryside and how to best take care of the apple trees growing in the garden. Instead, it is related to questioning how the garden appears to me as a garden, to how I can learn to stay with the apples that grow in the garden, to dwell and to be at home there. I do not learn to dwell in a garden amidst apple trees when I am avoiding controlling the unfolding of this environment. I learn to dwell in the garden when I allow the garden to appear to me as a garden and when I let the apples be apples, when I do not think of the walk in the garden as a resource, done for the sake of something else. This also means that nature can be experienced in places that are not conventionally thought of as being natural. I can also learn to dwell amidst the apples when I am sharing an apple pie with

friends if I do not think of this gathering in terms of efficiency, or if I do not think of this gathering as a means for achieving something else. To learn to dwell, we should attempt to pay attention to that which allowed the gathering to appear to us as such, to the summer that nourished the apple trees, to our friendships, to the flavours of apple pies. We should allow all of these to come together in this gathering, and through this, allow for the appearance of the gods, allow the gathering to appear as something special and important.

This thesis also explored how we can investigate Heidegger's notion of technological thinking and dwelling without falling back to the rural nostalgia that is evident in the examples that he gives of dwelling in the fourfold. The thesis looked at how cultures, for Heidegger, are not static and homogenous but constantly changing and evolving. Learning to dwell, then, does not mean a return to the past and to old ways of doing things, excluding dissenting voices from the homeland. Instead, it requires finding new ways of dwelling and being that evolve and change, but yet are always in part conditioned by what came before. The thesis also demonstrated how resisting technological thinking and learning to dwell does not imply the rejection of technological devices. Although Heidegger himself was suspicious of modern technology and of dwelling amidst technical devices, his philosophy offers tools for thinking about dwelling amidst these modern technical devices in ways that perhaps even Heidegger himself did not recognise. What is important is not the technological nature of the device itself, but the kinds of ways of engaging with the world that these devices encourage. Although technical devices might invite us to resort to technological thinking when engaging with beings, treating them as resources, it is not impossible to start engaging with these technical devices in different ways, and to start reflecting on how these technical devices, too, make up the world in which we can learn to dwell. This thesis also illustrated what it might mean to dwell in urban areas and how we might learn to question nature in the urban, even in areas where there are only a few trees in sight and little evidence of what we might

traditionally think of as belonging to nature. So dwelling does not only have to involve practices such as sharing apple pies with friends, which remind us of older, traditional ways of doing things. Dwelling can also occur in a crowded, morning rush-hour train as we are commuting to work, as the train quickly moves past all the gardens with apple trees that we may merely glimpse.

Nature in Green Politics

This way of thinking nature allowed for a new way of approaching the role it plays in green politics. In this new interpretation, protecting nature is no longer associated with protecting the environment. When we are concerned with environmental problems, we should not talk about these problems in terms of protecting nature. And similarly, when we are discussing anthropocentrism, when we are discussing extending the moral community to include beings that are not humans, nature should not feature in these discussions. The fact that a certain set of beings has been framed as natural through different political and ideological interests should not play a part in us deciding whether these beings should be accorded intrinsic value.

But none of this means that nature cannot play a role in green politics. This thesis suggested thinking of green politics as having two different kinds of goals, the goal of protecting nature and the goal of protecting the environment. Protecting nature should therefore be seen as one of two goals that green politics has. Protecting nature is about resisting Heidegger's technological thinking, resisting thinking of things that we encounter as something that we can control and use as a resource. It is about paying attention to how beings can appear to us as beings, and how we can never fully understand how a being was able to appear to us as a being in the first place.

Green politics cannot directly tell us how we should question these beings and there are no political actions that can be undertaken that would result in us automatically overcoming technological thinking and learning to question nature. Instead, resisting technological thinking must always take place in the form of our own personal journeys of questioning the unfolding nature. But green politics can aim to practise the kind of politics that makes this kind of questioning easier. The thesis suggested that clues to what this could entail can be found from the sphere of urban planning. Urban areas that have mixed uses and where the usage of these spaces is not tightly regulated and controlled make it easier for people to think of their surroundings in terms of something other than a resource.

It is also important to note that although the thesis has been concerned with the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics, the purpose has not been to suggest that nature could only be questioned from within green thinking. Because protecting nature has now been divorced from protecting the environment, we can question and protect nature in many different ways, for example, through art or through exploring urban place making. Green thinking is one way of approaching the question of nature where questioning nature can sit well with the second goal of green politics, the goal of protecting nature. Neither has the purpose of the thesis been to suggest that reading Heidegger is the only possible way of questioning nature. There are many different paths we can take towards protecting nature and indeed, Heidegger encourages us to look for our own ways of questioning nature (see e.g. WCT: 146; WHD: 158-9).

Contributions

This thesis makes two contributions to the existing literature. The main contribution is made to the literature on green politics by gaining a better understanding of what the concept of

nature refers to in this literature and why it seems to be such an important concept. By explaining that protecting nature should not play a part in the practice of environmental politics, the thesis demonstrated how we should discuss environmental degradation without making any references to nature, without talking about the destruction of nature, without talking about the complicated relationships that we share with nature or without talking about according intrinsic value to nature. Because nonhuman nature does not exist, what comes to count as nature in these debates is always a result of the assertion of political interests or ideologically motivated framings of parts of the environment as natural. Talking about nature here only serves to make discussing how we might best take care of our environments more difficult by demanding that certain areas of the environment should be privileged because certain interests have framed these areas as natural. Taking this idea of nature out of the debates on the environment allows for a better focus on existing environmental problems that extend to areas that we do not conventionally think of as natural but that are still worthy of investigation (see e.g. Light, 2001).

But the thesis divorced nature from environmental politics by explaining that this concept of nature should not be wholly abandoned, and that it should still play a role in thinking about green politics. This, I hope, can allow many who are interested in protecting the environment to stop using the concept of nature to think about environmental degradation because it demonstrates that even if the idea of nature should not play a role in thinking about environmental destruction, there can still be a place for protecting nature in green politics. This exploration of the concept of nature also opens up avenues and new ways of thinking about how to protect nature. The dangers of conflating the protection of nature with the protection of the environment are pointed out, for example, by Vaden (2010: 7), who criticises the Finnish radical deep ecologist Pentti Linkola for forgetting his earlier reflections on a poetic Finland when he began to concentrate on preventing the destruction of the

environment. So here, the goal of protecting nature was forgotten as Linkola began to focus more environmental destruction. The introduction of protecting nature as a goal in its own right, separate from fighting environmental degradation, thus can allow us to pay more attention to it.

This way of thinking about nature has, for example, allowed me to make better sense of what is at stake in protecting the environment, and to reflect on what makes the apples in my grandparents' garden important for me, why I think that they should be protected. It has allowed me to get over nature when thinking about protecting the environment while still being able to talk about nature and pay attention to it. This has had a positive impact on my thinking about environmental degradation and nature. When I was a child, I was very concerned about environmental degradation. I remember sitting on the back seat of a car as my parents were driving back to Helsinki from my grandparents' house, looking at the forests out of the window and thinking about how much of the surrounding forests would be destroyed in the future, and if there will still be something that I can call nature left. I had a sense that all of this was inevitable, that there was nothing that I could do about it, other than watch this destruction happen.

I am still very concerned about environmental degradation, and the more that I read and study, the more concerned I get. But in some ways, reflecting on the question of nature has made me feel that there is more to be done about this than I had previously acknowledged. I no longer think of protecting the environment and nature as something that should aim to keep the environment in its natural state. Even if the Finnish forests change, and they will change, and even if with the proliferation of environmental problems, there are still new avenues we can pursue to protect and take care of our environments. The question is, then, what kinds of new environments are created and how we can learn to take care of these. This, as explored in previous chapters, is the kind of point made by De-Shalit (2000) who

encourages us to investigate environmental problems that exist with us currently, and not to stay inactive and passive in the face of environmental destruction because we are yearning of some green, utopian communities.

Thinking about the concept of nature also introduces a host of other concerns. These are concerns over how we can learn to dwell in the fourfold and resist technological thinking, how we can protect nature, how we can continue to dwell in a world that is changing, and where our traditions and different ways of doing things are also constantly transforming. Thinking about nature encourages us to reflect on these issues by demonstrating how they cannot be addressed by trying to exist in harmony with a nonhuman nature but constitute a sphere of inquiry that is separate from taking care of the environment, and how Heidegger's philosophy can provide us with one way of beginning to question nature.

There are, however, many debates on green politics that this thesis has not touched upon. The aim here has not been to solve any debates in green politics, but rather, to give new tools for thinking about these debates. I have not attempted to answer the question of which one is better, the rules-based approach to ecocentrism that concentrates more on preventing environmental degradation, or deep ecology that puts more emphasis on cultivating a sense of place and on dwelling. Neither have I touched upon the question of whether we should aim to extend the moral community to include nonhumans and how we should go about doing this. These questions remain open. However, by thinking about the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics, I hope to have provided some tools which can help answer them by demonstrating how the question of nature does not play a role in answering questions concerning the kinds of political structures that can best take care of our environments.

It is also important to highlight that although I have claimed to be looking into the role that the concept of nature plays in green politics, the purpose here has not been to make big

generalisations about what the whole of green politics is about. Even at the end of this thesis, I have not attempted to produce a definitive statement of what all of green thinking is about. Not all the greens show concern for nature in the way that has been discussed in this thesis. There is, for example, little concern for nature, as it is understood in this thesis, in Eckersley's account of ecocentrism that investigates extending our moral communities to include nonhumans and with the kinds of political structures that can best accomplish this. There are also those who focus on the sacrifices that we must make to address the environmental crisis and are less concerned with the sense of place that questioning nature can bring about (see e.g. Maniates and Meyer, 2010). But there are plenty of those who do focus on nature. This thesis explored, for example, Curry's (2006) emphasis on questioning the mysteries of the unfolding on nature, Sagoff's (1996) account of paying attention to the places in which we live, and Barry's (2012) attempts to describe a sustainable, low-carbon society that is also good for human flourishing. It is these kinds of approaches to green politics that I hope this thesis can help make sense of.

The second contribution that this thesis makes is to the literature on green interpretations of Heidegger's philosophy. This literature often assumes that the references to the earth and the sky in Heidegger's work must refer to the literal sky and to the literal earth, that the references to nature must refer to the nonhuman environment, and to protect the earth, the sky and nature, we must allow them to unfold in ways that are appropriate to them. This conclusion is often seen as such an obvious one to draw that it needs no further thinking. But by investigating the idea of truth in Heidegger's work and the role that the earth plays in the happening of truth closely, the thesis demonstrated that the earth cannot be understood in terms of that which allows for the biological growth of plants. Heidegger's thought cannot have impact on protecting the environment, this inquiry is never taken for the sake of protecting the environment. Although learning to dwell on the earth might seem like

something that allows us to interact with our environments in a harmonious manner, it can never be guaranteed to have any environmentally friendly outcomes. This thesis thus presented a new way of thinking about these concepts, and demonstrated how Heidegger's thought can have much more radical implications for thinking about the concept of nature than is often recognised.

Finally, although I have claimed to present an answer to the question of the role that the concept of nature should play in green politics in the thesis, this does not mean that the concept of nature has now become an unproblematic concept, and that the problems in discussing the concept of nature that have been discussed in the thesis would no longer arise. The question of how we engage with the powerful narratives of naturalness, with the social, political, cultural and ideological factors that come to label something as natural still remains. The task of knowing when we are dwelling, allowing things to appear in the fourfold as the things that they are, and when we are fighting for preserving a particular way of ordering things because an environment has been labelled as natural still remains difficult. It is still easy to think of gathering apples and eating apple pies with friends in the autumn as tuning into some natural rhythms of life given to us by an unchanging nonhuman nature.

These problems do not only apply to places that we might conventionally think of as being natural but also apply to urban places. This can be elaborated by returning briefly to Jane Jacobs' position on urban planning that was discussed in the last chapter. Jacobs suggests planning urban spaces in a way that does not regulate their usage too much but allows for the mixed use of urban spaces. But even in this discussion of urban spaces, there still lies a danger of appealing to some idea of naturalness and to some natural order of things. It is as if in Jacobs' account there exists some natural balance in the city, and if we refrain from controlling and regulating the city, if we allow people to organise their being in the city

themselves, we can allow for the spontaneous emergence of this natural balance (see e.g. Allen, 1999: 62; Massey, 1999: 110).

There are no easy ways to address these concerns, these troubles will exist as long as we do not insist on stopping talking about nature altogether. All I can say in response to these concerns is that I am aware of these dangers, and we need to remain careful when we continue to talk about nature. At the same time, the kind of thinking about nature that has been undertaken in this thesis can help avoid some of these dangers by drawing attention to them. If it is so difficult to stop talking about nature, as seems to be suggested by the fact that the word 'nature' often finds its way back into the green writings even after its usage has been criticised, if this idea of nature finds its way back into our thinking again and again, then I think it is better to be able to say what nature is. This way, it is easier for us to pay attention to how we talk about nature, and easier to avoid the problems that talking about nature often leads us to.

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